



NEWS: NIKON LAUNCHES 24MP D7100
ENTHUSIAST WEATHER-PROOF DSLR



amateur Photographer

THE WORLD'S NO.1 WEEKLY PHOTO MAGAZINE

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Saturday 9 March 2013

70-200mm PREMIUM ZOOMS

Telephoto lenses tested head-to-head

NIKON

SONY

TAMRON

SIGMA

CANON

SIMPLE 'STUDIO' STILL LIFE

Indoor floral
masterclass:
learn to light
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Surviving adverse conditions
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ADD A COLOUR BURST

How to use pocket flash and
lighting gels for dramatic effect

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Which camera beat 57 other products to win three prizes at the Amateur Photographer awards this year?

Enthusiast Camera of the Year 2013



This category is the homeland of the AP reader, and the nominated cameras are those the AP reader is buying or wants to buy. These cameras come at a premium price, but what they give back to the photographer makes the cost thoroughly worthwhile. The winning camera of this year's award is a freak of technology and grabbed all the headlines and wish lists as soon as it was launched – and then it met all our expectations.



Damien Demolder,
Editor, Amateur Photographer magazine

I AM A WINNER

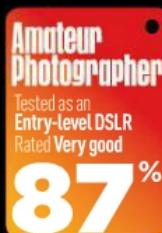
AP Editor's award speech

'Each of the cameras nominated for the Amateur Photographer Consumer Camera of the Year 2013 award deserves to win a prize for the level of control it offers, for the image quality it is capable of producing and for the fantastic value it provides for *not only* the SLR beginner. This year's winner, though, goes beyond the field with its exceptional sensor and professional-level resolution. That camera is the Nikon D3200.'

Test extracts AP 16/06/12

'Most importantly, the D3200 is capable of some very impressive images even with the 18-55mm VR kit lens, and more so with a fixed prime such as the 35mm or 50mm f/1.8. Crisp and punchy images with a wide dynamic range can be produced on a large scale thanks to the high resolution.'

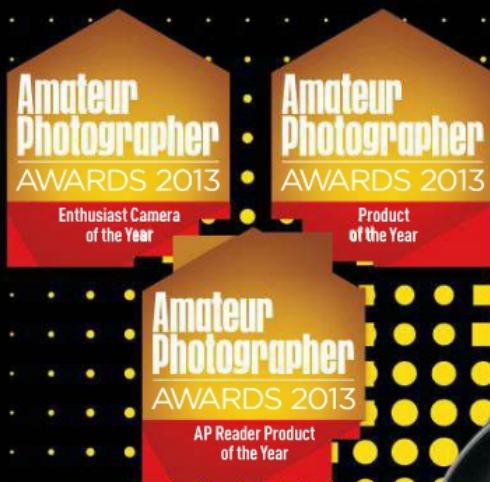
'Using the 18-55mm kit lens, at ISO 100 the D3200 reaches the 30 marker on our resolution charts, which is equivalent to class-leading APS-C-format cameras such as the Sony Alpha 77 and even full-frame models like the Canon EOS 5D Mark III. For an "entry-level" camera, this is exciting.'



Nikon D3200

● Consumer Camera of the Year 2013





- **Product of the Year**
- **AP Reader Product of the Year**
- **Enthusiast Camera of the Year**

Nikon D800

Editor's note

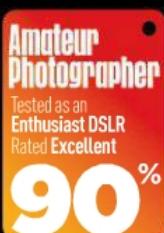
Scooping three AP awards, the Nikon D800 has been a true camera sensation, and it was obvious immediately that it could be our Product of the Year. The D800 has been the talking point of 2012/13, creating a massive stir and almost defeating the AP resolution test chart by reaching a higher reading than every camera before it. The Nikon D800 wasn't only popular with our technical team: it was voted the most admired and desired camera by the readers, too.

Test extracts AP 28/04/12

'We talk about the bar being raised occasionally, and Nikon has certainly raised the bar in the full-frame market.'

'With the high resolution of the D800, not only is Nikon setting a benchmark for stills cameras, but it is also aiming at the video market. Enthusiast film-makers will appreciate the full-time contrast-detection AF in movie capture, with face-priority and subject-tracking AF available.'

'The camera's AF is spot-on in virtually every situation. Even in moonlight, subjects are detected with minimal hunting. Most other AF systems simply would not operate under these conditions.'



Contents

Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

I WONDER whether it is convenience or quality that regulates the way you look at your finished images. Historically, the two have been some distance apart, as those of us who used to shoot everything on slide film will remember. Slides represented the ultimate technical quality of the time, but were frankly a pain to project – and you'd never set up the projector to display just one or two images, it had to be a 'show'.

Now, of course, you can plug your camera or your card into a TV to view your images and share them with as many people as you can fit in your living room. The problem is that the quality of the display may not show your images off at their best. Prints,

even those made in the one-hour lab, will always exceed the resolution and dynamic range of a TV and even the newest tablet screens, but getting a print requires some effort on the part of the photographer.

And there is the rub – quality or convenience. My father only ever views his pictures on the 2in screen on the back of his camera. I suppose it's a question of what suits you best.

See pages 62–63, where Professor Newman looks at the means by which we view images.



Damien Demolder
Editor

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Single shoulder-sling straps help to keep a camera close to hand and bring it quickly to the eye. Jon Stapley tests six of the best



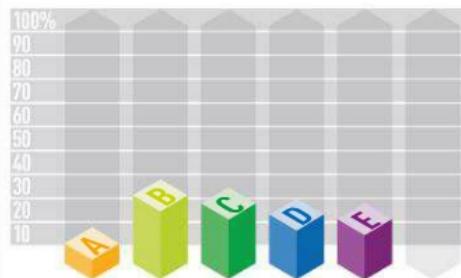
HOW TO HAVE YOUR PICTURES PUBLISHED IN READER SPOTLIGHT Send in a selection of up to ten images. They can be either a selection of different images or all have the same theme. Digital files sent on CD should be saved in a Photoshop-compatible format, such as JPEG or TIFF, with a contact sheet and submission form. Visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight for details. We cannot publish images without the necessary technical details. Each RGB image should be a minimum of 2480 pixels along its longest length. Transparencies and prints are also accepted. We recommend that transparencies are sent without glass mounts and posted via Special Delivery. For transparencies, prints or discs to be returned you must include an SAE with sufficient postage.

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THE AP READERS' POLL

IN AP 16 FEBRUARY WE ASKED...

Do you ever read *National Geographic*?



YOU ANSWERED...

A Yes, every month	8%
B Yes, occasionally	29%
C I used to	24%
D I should do	20%
E It wouldn't interest me	19%

THIS WEEK WE ASK...

How do you view your finished images?

VOTE ONLINE www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

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Discover how to achieve amazing photographs in adverse conditions with professional photographer David Shaw



© DAVID SHAW/ANNA COOK

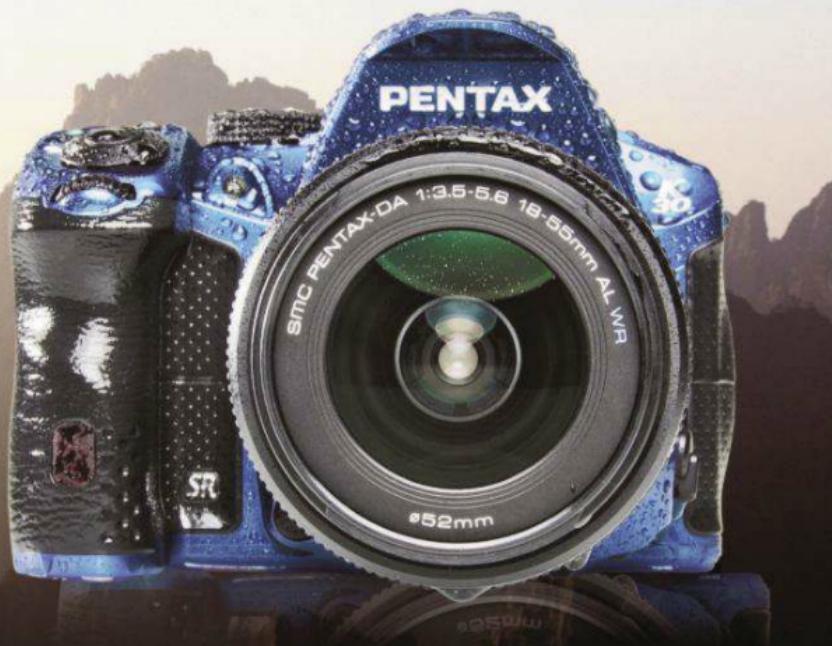
PENTAX

K30

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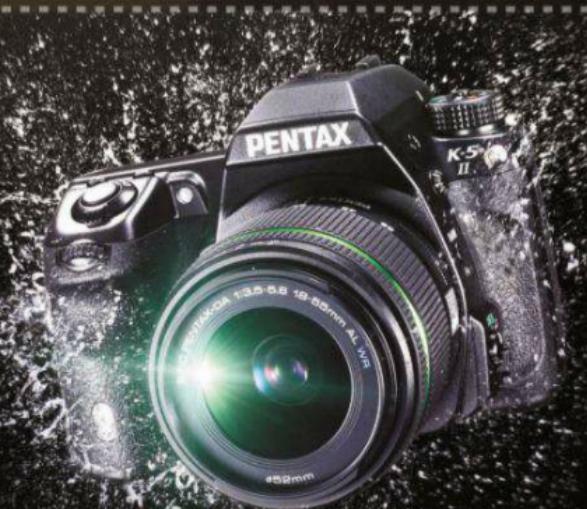
Pentax K30 Body Only **Our Price £469.00** or pay £23.45 per month Pentax K30 18-55mm WR Kit **Our Price £529.00** or £22.04 per month

K30 18-55 + 50-200 WR Twin Kit **Our Price £679.00** or £28.29 p/m K30 18-135mm WR Kit **Our Price £769.00** or £32.04 p/m

PENTAX K-5 II

As the flagship model of the K series, the K-5 II boasts many advanced functions and user-friendly features, including a newly developed AF sensor assuring a broader AF working EV range.

- New SAFOX X AF module
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APNews

News | Analysis | Comment | PhotoDiary 9/3/13

By mutual agreement the contract was terminated

Photo museum delayed, page 7

- 24.1MP sensor • 51-point AF • Due 21 March

NIKON TARGETS D7100 AT ENTHUSIASTS

NIKON has unveiled an 'enthusiast-level' camera called the D7100 as it strives to boost DSLR ownership in the UK – which lags way behind Germany and Switzerland.

As we went to press, the D7100 was due to be showcased at the Focus on Imaging show in Birmingham from 3–6 March.

The 'extremely durable' D7100 boasts a new 24.1-million-pixel sensor and weather sealing on a par with the firm's D800. It will run alongside the 16.2-million-pixel D7000, which was launched in September 2010.

The new DX-format flagship is due out on 21 March priced £1,099.99 body only, or £1,299.99 in a kit that includes an 18–105mm VR lens.

At the London launch it emerged that, in the UK, fewer than half as many consumers – 77 out of every 10,000 – own a DSLR compared to Switzerland, where 163 per 10,000 people have one.

The figures reveal that Germany also beats the UK, with 113 DSLR owners per 10,000 people.

France also fares poorly, however, with 74 per 10,000 people said to own a DSLR, according to the data that Nikon obtained from market analysts at GfK.

Nikon UK general manager John Walshe

said Nikon held a 45.3% volume share of the UK DSLR market in December 2012.

But he told an audience of journalists and UK photo dealers that he feels there is room for improvement.

'We have a responsibility to engage everyone in the UK to develop a passion for photography,' said Walshe at a central London briefing about the new D7100.

The D7100 will sit above the D5200, and below the full-frame D600, in Nikon's DSLR line-up.

Billed as compact and lightweight, it will come without a low-pass optical filter in a bid to boost image sharpness.

Nikon Consumer DSLR product manager Simon Iddon said the camera was 'made for those with a real passion for photography', targeting both enthusiasts and aspiring professionals.

The D7100 features magnesium-alloy top and bottom covers, a 6fps burst rate and built-in sensor cleaning.

Dual SD memory-card slots are included, as are a 51-point AF system (with 15 cross-



sensors in the central area) and phase-detection AF possible down to -2EV, according to Nikon.

'AF operation is possible under a combined aperture value of f/8, allowing more combinations of lenses and teleconverters to be used – new to cameras of this class,' the firm added in a statement.

ISO ranges from 100–6400 but can be expanded to 25,600, and users have the facility to bolster the telephoto effect by 1.3x. This crop mode – which limits resolution to 15.4 million pixels – allows use of the 51 AF points and 7fps shooting.

A virtual-horizon function can be used in vertical and horizontal formats, and an HDR mode takes two consecutive images at different exposures and combines them into one.

Weighing 675g, the D7100 incorporates spot white balance for 'quick and precise white balance in live view'. The 3.2in LCD screen has a resolution of 1.2 million dots.

● See next week's issue for a hands-on preview of the Nikon D7100

SNAP SHOTS

● Sony has become the largest shareholder in Olympus as the firms complete the £400m deal first announced last year. Olympus Japan confirmed that Sony Corporation holds nearly 35 million shares, giving Sony 11.46% of overall voting rights.

● London Camera Exchange (LCE) has moved one of its Manchester shops to premises formerly run by Jacobs, a chain that shut down last year. The new store – which moves from Piccadilly Plaza – is based at 16 Cross Street, Manchester M2 7AE. Tel: 0161 834 7500. LCE operates 28 stores around the UK.

JESSOPS STORE SPRINGS BACK TO LIFE

TWO OF Jessops ex-staff members have brought their store back to life.

Former managers Paul Crockett and Robert Peckham – who had both worked at Jessops for six years – have taken over the shop in Bicester, Oxfordshire, and will run it as an independent photographic retailer.

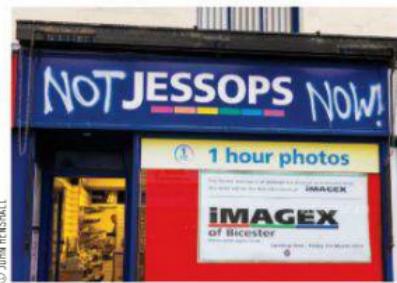
The pair say they have received 'significant financial support' from local investors for the new venture.

Robert Peckham added: 'This store has

over 20 years' successful history as an independent photographic shop on the same site.

'Many of our long-standing customers remember its former identity as That Camera Place, for almost 10 years before Jessops took over the business in 2005.'

The new store, called Imagex, was set to be opened on 1 March by Charlie Ross, an auctioneer and BBC presenter who is a local resident and a former customer.



Do you have a story?

Contact Chris Cheeseman
Tel: 0203 148 4129
Fax: 0203 148 8130
amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com

A week of photographic opportunity

PHOTO DIARY

Wednesday 6 March

DON'T MISS Focus on Imaging 2013, last day at NEC Birmingham. Costs £10 on the door. Tel: 01489 882 800. Visit www.focus-on-imaging.co.uk.

EXHIBITION Herbert Pointing: Captain Scott's Antarctic Expedition 1910-1913, until 23 March at Chris Beetles Fine Photographs, London W1B 4DE. Tel: 0207 434 4319. Visit www.chrisbeetlesfinephotos.com.

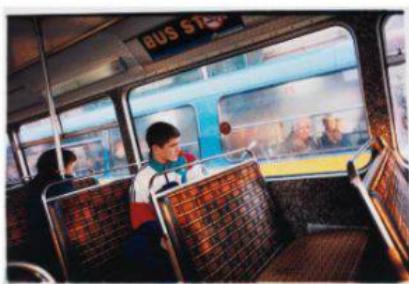
Thursday 7 March

EXHIBITION 24: 2013, outdoor exhibition (curated by Magnum photographer Peter Marlow), until 23 March at Berkeley Square, Mayfair, London. Visit www.24photography.org. **EXHIBITION** Century of Style by Norman Parkinson, until 12 May at the National Theatre, London SE1 9PX. Tel: 0207 452 3000. Visit www.nationaltheatre.org.uk.

Friday 8 March

EXHIBITION

Tom Wood: Photographs 1973-2013, until 16 June at the National Media Museum, West Yorkshire BD1 1NQ. Tel: 0844 856 3797. Visit www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk.



EXHIBITION After the Fall by Hin Chua, until 17 March at The Third Floor Gallery, Cardiff CF10 5AD. Tel: 0292 115 9151. Visit www.thirdfloorgallery.com.

Saturday 9 March

EXHIBITION A Woman's Place... (photos of British Army women during the Second World War) by Alison Baskerville, until 13 April at Firepower, The Royal Artillery Museum, London SE18 6ST. Tel: 0208 855 7755. Visit www.firepower.org.uk. **EXHIBITION** East End Faces, by David Bailey, until 26 May at William Morris Gallery, London E17 4PP. Tel: 0208 496 4390. Visit www.wmgallery.org.uk.

Sunday 10 March

EXHIBITION Man Ray Portraits, until 27 May at National Portrait Gallery, London WC2H 0HE. Tel: 0207 306 0055. Visit www.npg.org.uk.

EXHIBITION Somalia - A Humanitarian Story, until 15 March at the Royal Geographical Society, London SW7 2AR. Tel: 0207 591 3000. Visit www.rgs.org.

Monday 11 March

EXHIBITION Vivian Maier at Chris Beetles Fine Photographs, London W1B 4DE, until 6 April. Tel: 0207 434 4319. Visit www.chrisbeetlesfinephotos.com. **EXHIBITION** Tyler Udall, until 16 March at The Little Black Gallery, London SW10 0AJ. Tel: 0207 349 9332. Visit www.thelittleblackgallery.com.



Tuesday 12 March LATEST AP ON SALE

EXHIBITION Lucky Photojournalism in 20th Century America, until 13 April at Daniel Blau, London N1 6PB. Tel: 0207 831 7998. Visit www.danielblau.com. **DON'T MISS** Walk with an archaeologist: the Stonehenge landscape (10am-1pm, cost £16), meet at the Stonehenge car park, near Amesbury, Wiltshire. To book call 0844 249 1895 (5% booking fee applies). Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

HX300 boasts improved image stabilisation

SONY LAUNCHES 50x ZOOM BRIDGE CAMERA

SONY has launched a new bridge camera with a 50x zoom, but won't say whether it plans to introduce a larger, 1in sensor to this buoyant market.

The Sony Cyber-shot HX300 features a 20.4-million-pixel, 1/2.3in Exmor R imaging sensor and sports a 24-1200mm Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* f/2.8-6.3 zoom lens.

Due out in mid-March, priced around £420, the HX300 boasts six lens groups, compared to five on its predecessor, the HX200V.

The lens includes Super ED glass elements to help combat chromatic aberration – the first for a Cyber-shot model.

Sony says it has improved its Optical SteadyShot image stabilisation.



'The position of a second group of lens elements shifts rapidly to correct for tiny hand tremors, making it twice as easy to frame shots comfortably,' claims the firm.

Sony says this compensation equates to up to 4.5 stops.

A Sony spokesman acknowledged that the improvement in image stabilisation comes as the company seeks to highlight the benefits of its cameras over smartphones.

On-board controls include a manual ring, custom button and a jog dial.

The HX300 features a top ISO of 12,800 and comes with a 3in, 921,000-dot-resolution LCD screen, plus a full HD movie mode.

● The Sony Cyber-shot HX300 will be fully tested in next week's issue

DAVID ADAMS JOINS PARK CAMERAS

FORMER Jessops chief David Adams has been appointed chairman of West Sussex-based photo retailer Park Cameras.

David Adams left Jessops as chairman in February 2012, before the chain's recent troubles.

In recent interviews, Adams said he had left Jessops after making an unsuccessful bid to persuade the chain's bank, HSBC, to accept a private-equity takeover deal.

In a statement, Park Cameras, which is based in Burgess Hill, said: 'David is a highly regarded figure within the industry, seeing Jessops through a tough transitional period...

'He brings a wealth of business and financial experience to Park Cameras, having held a number of senior executive

and non-executive roles within a number of household names across the retail sector.'

Roscoe Atkins, who replaced his father Reg as managing director of Park Cameras on 1 March, told AP that the business is looking to grow its current turnover of £16m.

Adams said: 'The recent changes in the industry create opportunities for a business that is focused on providing great service for its customers. I look forward to working with Roscoe and the team at Park to realise those opportunities.'

Adams' retail experience includes previous roles at House of Fraser and, most recently, HMV, where he was a non-executive director until the music and DVD retailer fell into administration.

Reg Atkins is retiring from Park Cameras after 43 years.

SNAP SHOTS

● The National Media Museum (NMM) has shed nine staff in the first part of a shake-up announced last year. In October, the NMM launched a spending review as part of a restructure designed to cut running costs after visitor numbers halved. A spokesman for the NMM, which is based at Bradford, West Yorkshire, said all nine roles have gone through voluntary redundancy and that the photo collection itself has not been affected by the cuts.

● A man has been accused of threatening to blow up Kodak's HQ following an investigation by the FBI in Rochester, USA. Omer Fadhel Saleh Mohammed, 31, from Rochester, is accused of making 21 calls to emergency number 911, claiming that a terrorist was going to bomb Kodak Corporation. He was arrested and charged with making false bomb threats and could face up to 10 years in jail. The calls were said to have been made between 24 September 2012 and 24 January 2013.



© KATE ELLIOTT

MEDIA SPACE GALLERY DELAYED

MEDIA Space bosses have been forced to put back the photo gallery's scheduled June opening by three months, after the project manager quit for another post.

The gallery – set to showcase a mixture of National Media Museum (NMM) exhibits – covering photography, film, television and the internet, is now expected to open to the public until 21 September.

It will be situated on the second floor of the Science Museum in South Kensington, London.

A spokesperson for Media Space – which had originally been due to open in the spring – told AP that the project manager, an external consultant, chose to leave the project, meaning that Media Space had to search for a new project management team.

'By mutual agreement the original contract was terminated as an appropriate replacement was not available.'

This impacted on the capital build schedule,' added the spokesperson.

Media Space is the result of a tie-up between the Science Museum and the NMM in Bradford, West Yorkshire, which recently announced major cost cuts.

The spokesperson said uncertainty surrounding the ongoing restructure at the NMM – which prompted a shift in certain job roles and a change in leadership there – has also played a part in the delay of Media Space.

However, she added: 'No one directly related to the delivery of Media Space has left the National Media Museum during the current review.'

In an earlier statement, Media Space said: 'Taking into account contingency time for delays, we felt that there was too short a time to realistically finish the build and install the first exhibitions in time for a June opening.'

NEX-3N IS LATEST CSC FROM SONY

SONY has unveiled a new compact system camera called the NEX-3N, which it trumpets as the smallest and lightest interchangeable-lens camera in its class.

Due with UK retailers in mid-March, the NEX-3N boasts a 16.1-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS imaging sensor, a tiltable LCD screen and a pop-up flash.

The NEX-3N replaces the NEX-F3, which was unveiled in May 2012.

In an interview with AP, Sony UK product manager for SLT and NEX, Joe Asai, explained that the sensor is the same as that featured in the NEX-5R, but includes a new algorithm to 'enable better image quality in low light'.

The 269g camera also features Auto Object Framing, as featured on the Alpha 58 (see News, AP 2 March), and

Area Specific Noise Reduction, as featured on the Alpha 99, a full-frame camera announced last year.

Claimed improvements include a redesigned grip to help prevent slipping.

Asai said Sony is aiming the NEX-3N at compact camera users who want to 'step up' and, to this end, has installed a zoom lever next to the on/off button, as featured on compact models.

The NEX-3N will come in a kit with a 16-50mm lens, priced around £400, or with 16-50mm and 55-210mm lenses in an outfit costing around £600.

Sony claims that the NEX-3N is the world's smallest, lightest interchangeable-lens camera with an APS-C-sized sensor and a pop-up flash. It measures 109.9x62x34.6mm.



HETHERINGTON 'UNLAWFULLY KILLED'

A CORONER has ruled that British photographer Tim Hetherington, who died in Libya in 2011, was unlawfully killed, according to press reports from the inquest.

The award-winning photojournalist was killed in Libya in April 2011, along with US photographer Chris Hondros.

Another UK photographer, Guy Martin, was injured when a mortar round landed on a group of journalists who were documenting attempts by Gaddafi forces to retake Tripoli Street in Misrata.

At the inquest, held on 11 February, it

emerged that, at the time, there had been some disagreement among those in the group with Hetherington as to whether they should remain with rebel fighters, according to reports by newspapers including *The Telegraph*.

In a statement, Guy Martin is reported to have told Westminster Coroner's Court that the group 'considered we had pushed our luck that day'.

He added: 'The fighting and level of violence we witnessed that morning was catastrophic, with hand-to-hand

fighting, grenades being thrown, buildings being set on fire with loyalist troops still inside and incoming mortar fire coming from miles away.'

Speaking after the inquest, Tim Hetherington's mother, Judith, told reporters: 'He was an image-maker and storyteller – that is how he liked to be described.'

'He was a wonderful humanitarian.'

AP interviewed Tim for a feature article in 2008. He was a former winner of AP's Power of Photography Award.



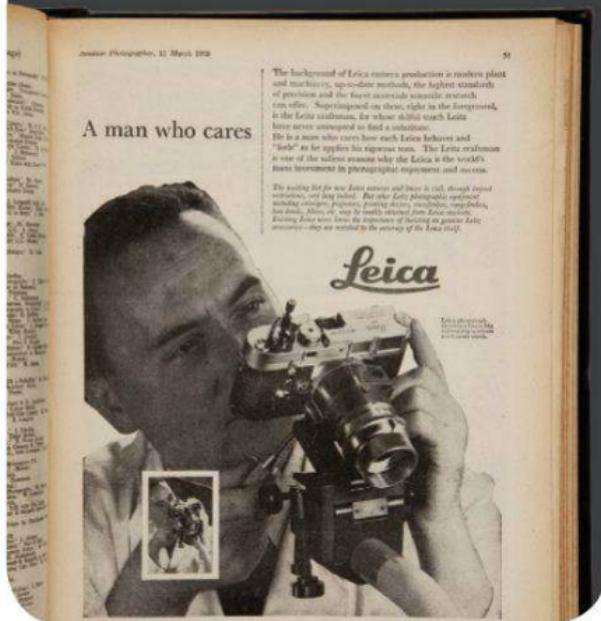
Do you have a story?

Contact Chris Cheesman
Tel: 0203 148 4129
Fax: 0203 148 8130
amateurphotographer@iogmedia.com

AP THIS WEEK IN...

1958

Prevailing import restrictions meant that the waiting list for Leica cameras was 'very long indeed', according to an advert placed in AP this week in 1958. The German manufacturer urged users to insist on 'genuine Leitz accessories', which, it pointed out, were readily available from official stockists. The advert described the Leica camera maker as a craftsman and a 'man who cares how each Leica behaves and "feels" as he applies his rigorous tests'. The firm claimed: 'The Leica craftsman is one of the salient reasons why Leica is the world's finest investment in photographic enjoyment and success.'



CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

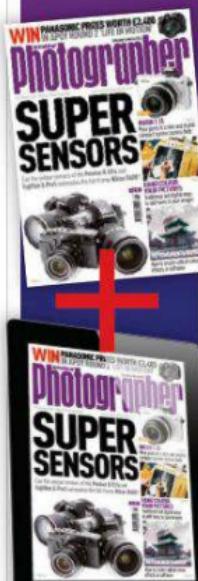
CROYDON CAMERA CLUB

The club stages its yearly exhibition from 11-23 March at the Croydon Clocktower Café, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX. Visit www.croydoncameraclub.org.uk.

RICHMOND AND TWICKENHAM PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The society will hold its annual show of fine-art photos and projected images from 20 March-1 April at the Landmark Arts Centre, Ferry Road, Teddington TW11 9NN. Tel: 0208 977 7558. Visit www.landmarkartscentre.org.

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Nikkor 800mm with teleconverter

NIKON REVEALS £15K SUPER-TELEPHOTO

NIKON has confirmed that its new 800mm super-telephoto lens, which is aimed at sports and press photographers, will go on sale on 4 April, priced £15,599.99.

The lens comes with an AF-S Teleconverter TC800-1.25E ED – the first to use an ED glass element, according to Nikon.

The AF-S Nikkor 800mm f/5.6E FL ED VR [Vibration Reduction] features fluorite lens elements and electromagnetic diaphragm control. The latter is designed to achieve accurate aperture control.

A spokesman added: 'This precise mechanism also

provides enhanced stability in auto-exposure control during continuous shooting, and increased accuracy – especially when the lens is used with its teleconverter, requiring double aperture linkage.'

A magnesium-alloy body helps to keep the optic's weight down to 4,590g or 4,725g with the teleconverter.

The lens is built from 20 elements in 13 groups, and contains two fluorite and two ED elements.

Nikon first unveiled a prototype of the lens at the Open Golf Championship in Lancashire last year.

RPS TO STAGE CAREER LECTURES AND REVIEWS

ASPIRING photographers are to be given advice from renowned professionals in a day of lectures and portfolio reviews to be hosted by the Royal Photographic Society (RPS).

The event, called Creative Photography and Commerce, will take place at the Watershed in Bristol on 22 March.

It is targeted primarily at students and 'early career photographers'.

Portfolio reviews will be open to photographers aged 35 and under, while a series of lectures that are accessible to all will focus on the 'relationship between personal work and commercial practice'.

RPS director general Dr Michael Pritchard said: 'Making a career in photography is challenging and making a commercial success of your photography can be much

harder. The Society is pleased to bring together established photographers and industry professionals to give the photographers of tomorrow the benefit of their experience.'

Photographers lined up to host portfolio reviews include Roger Tooth of *The Guardian*, Clare Hewitt, Ben Roberts, Angus Fraser and Anthony Holland Parkin from Getty Images.

Pritchard added: 'This is the first time such an event has been held in the south-west and we hope that those just starting their careers will take advantage of what will be a great day.'

A ticket to the lectures will cost £25, while a pass for both the lectures and portfolio reviews costs £55.

To book, visit www.rps.org/workshops.



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F5-6.3
APO DG OS HSM

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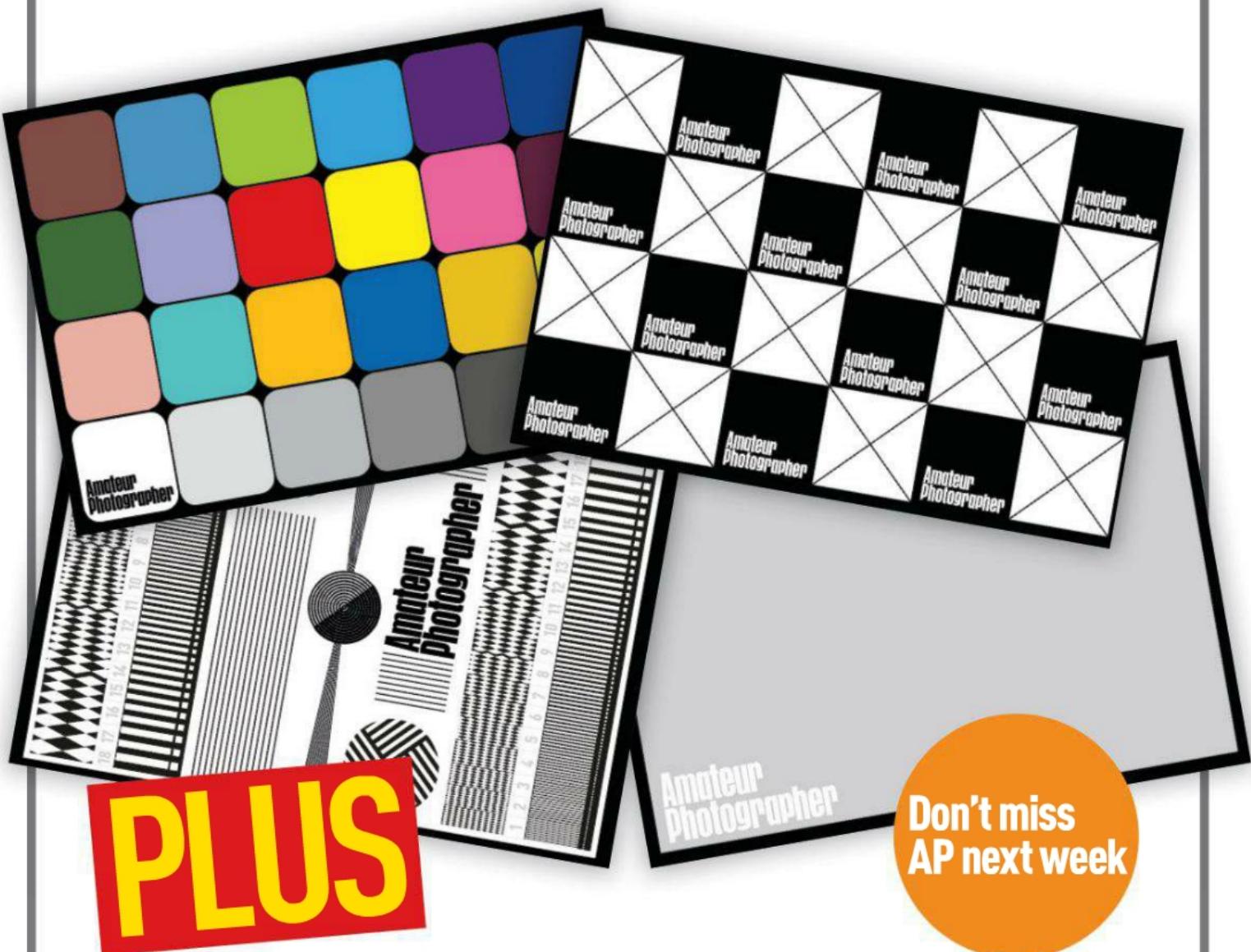
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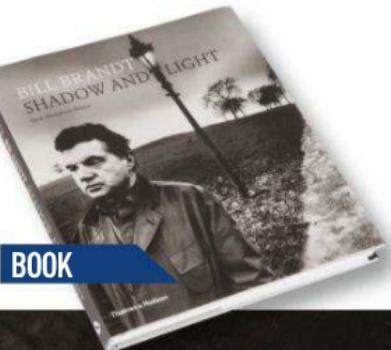
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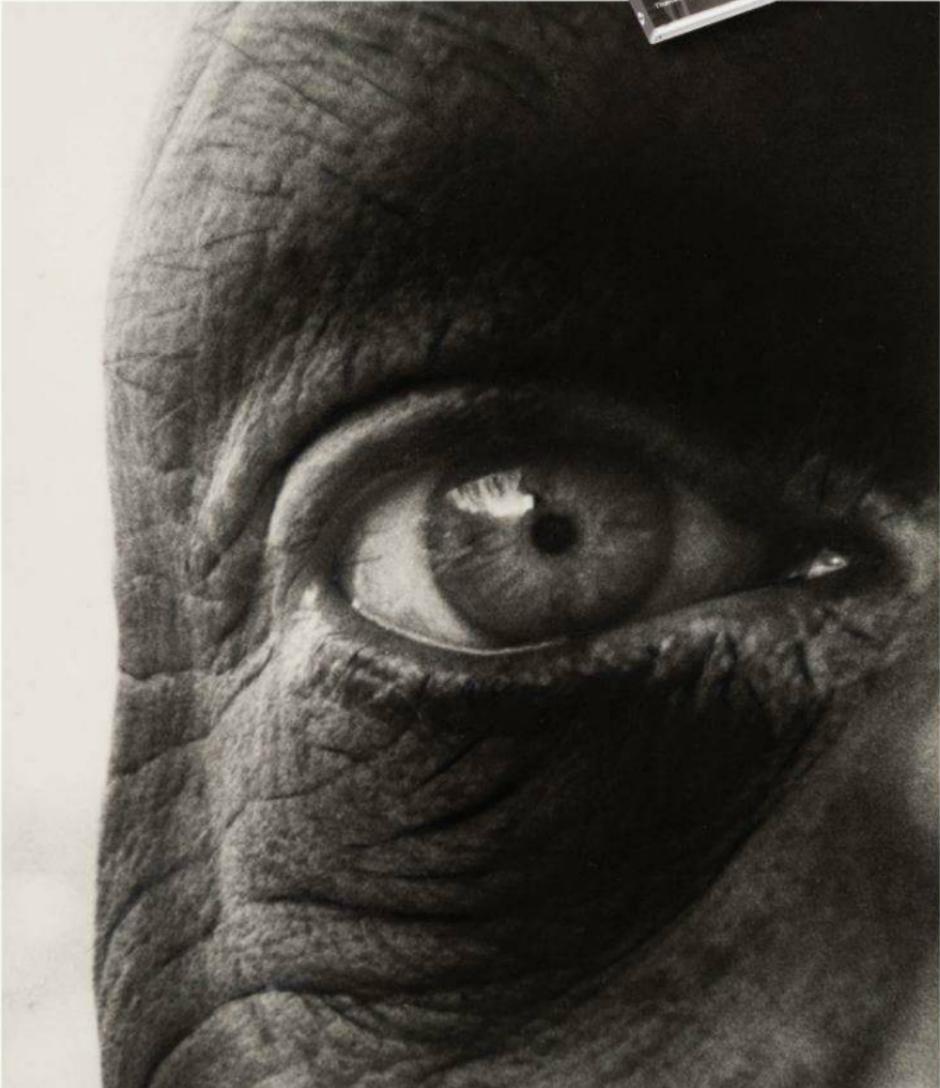
The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Jon Stapley



BOOK



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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, JOHN PAPARDO III FUND, © 2012 BILL BRANDT ARCHIVE LTD

Shadow and Light

By Sarah Hermanson Meister
Thames & Hudson, £34.95, hardback, 208 pages, ISBN 978-0-500-54424-2

WHILE Bill Brandt books are nothing new on the market (*Brandt Nudes* was reviewed in AP 1 December 2012), this full examination of his life's work is one of the broadest and most interesting. Not only do we see Brandt's accomplished photojournalism of English society before and during the Second World War, but there are also landscapes, portraits and nudes.

Author Sarah Hermanson Meister has garnered a wealth of biographical material. A glossary of Brandt's retouching techniques by Lee Ann Daffner is a particular treat. Brandt made no secret of his opinions on the value of retouching prints, and the technical details of how he shaped his final images are fascinating.



EXHIBITION

Geraldo de Barros: What Remains

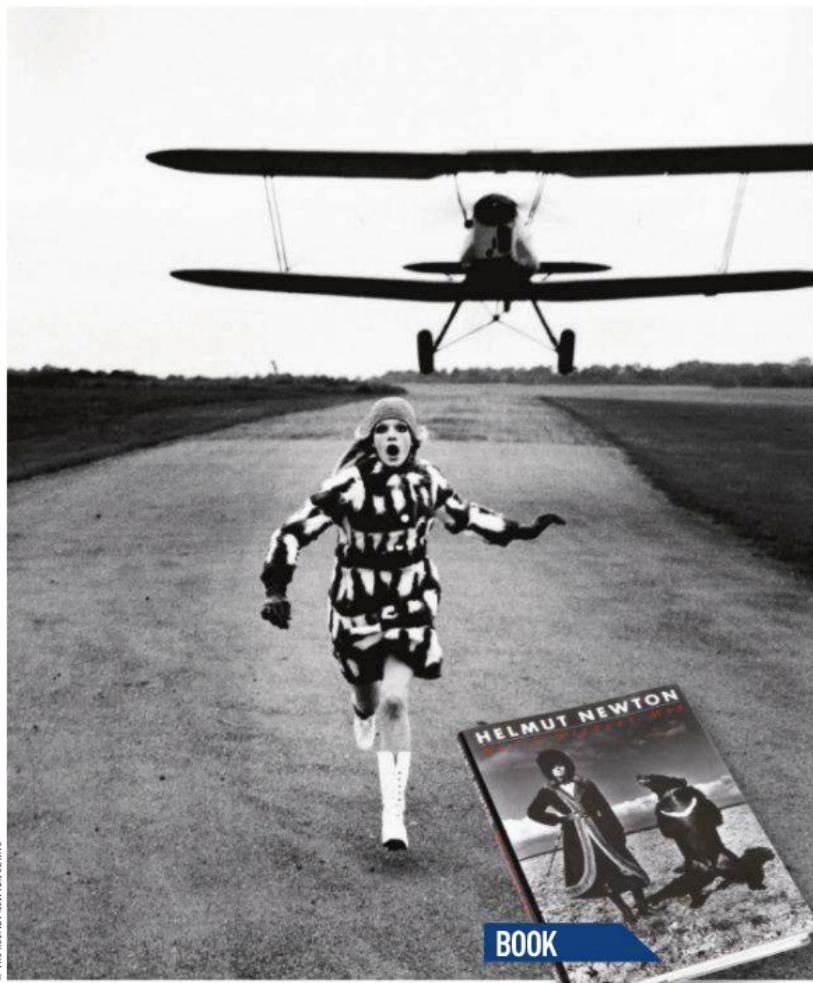
Until 7 April. The Photographers' Gallery, 16-18 Ramillies Street, London W1F 7LW. Tel: 0207 087 9300. Website: www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk. Open Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Thurs 10am-8pm, Sun 11:30am-6pm. Admission free

THE LATE Geraldo de Barros (1923-1998) has been a key modernist artistic figure in Brazil, inspiring young Brazilian artists in many disciplines as he worked as a photographer, designer, painter and engraver.

He experimented with photographic form early in his career, creating the series 'Fotoformas' (1946-51) that was exhibited in São Paulo in 1950, and then with 'Sobras' (1996-98), which he made after a series of strokes. He used practices such as scratching negatives and overpainting to create abstraction over his images.

'What Remains' brings these two bodies of work together, in Barros's first UK exhibition. Curated by Isobel Whitelegg, the exhibition showcases Barros's radical approach to his work throughout his career and is a fantastic insight into modern South American photography.

Demi Heath



World Without Men

By Helmut Newton. Taschen, £34.99, hardback, 188 pages, ISBN 978-3-8365-4512-9

WHETHER Helmut Newton's high-class fashion can really be termed a 'world without men' is up for debate, but it won't affect your enjoyment of this stylish book. Combining Newton's famous photography from the '60s to the '80s with some of his journal entries, this new edition shows us a man in love with his career, in love with the female form, and in love even with the heady commercialism of the fashion industry. Despite opposition

from editors, Newton thrived on pushing boundaries in what fashion photography could entail. The result was a unique and enormously influential body of work. Minus a quibble from a design perspective – why wasn't more effort made to match the images with the journal entries that describe them? – this is a first-class edition.



www.onphotobooks.com

THE UPDATES for this photo-book-focused site are currently rather infrequent, but what are on offer are thoughtful reviews of some real gems of photo books that you may not be familiar with. The site has multiple contributors, and there is a feeling of discovery in clicking through the pages and seeing the variety of books the writers have unearthed. The only thing currently working against the site is the sporadic update schedule, which makes the content a little sparse. A section on the top bar titled 'Essays', for instance, is entirely empty. With more diligent updating, this promising site could turn into something special.



CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market



● MASTERCLASS: PROFESSIONAL STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

by Dennis Savini, £45.99 Say 'studio photography' and many people immediately think of portraits, but there are many other ways for a studio photographer to earn a living. Dennis Savini uses examples of his own work to illustrate how to execute studio shots, and his advice is solid.

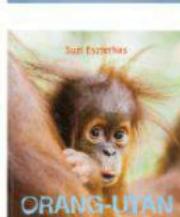
● THE PHOTOGRAPH: COMPOSITION AND COLOR DESIGN

by Harald Mante, £38.50 Harald Mante takes a very principled, technical approach to explaining the art of composing an image, with a focus on the rules of lines, shapes and colours. The visual aids are a tremendous help in understanding Mante's points, especially given that the writing is quite dry and analytical. This is a book for study, rather than idly flicking through.

● LAND OF CONTRAST: SOUTH AFRICA'S DIVERSE BIOMES

by Heinrich, Dana, Philip and Ingrid van den Berg, £40 In this book, a biome is defined as a region of a similar geology that supports a specific grouping of plant and animal life adapted to those conditions. The van den Berg family photographed the various biomes in South Africa, and have produced some vibrant and diverse images of life in the African wild.

● ORANG-UTAN by Suzi Eszterhas, £10.99 Orang-utans are naturally photogenic animals, and the images captured for this book are sure to delight any children with an interest in wildlife. Author Suzi Eszterhas provides the narrative of a baby orang-utan's first few years in the wild, and the interesting facts sprinkled throughout will ensure that youngsters learn something while enjoying the images.



Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 4GB media card*



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AS TOUGH AS THEY COME

What a fascinating article describing Alexander Jansen's photography while serving as an active combat engineer in Afghanistan (*Welcome to Afghanistan*, AP 23 February). His enthusiasm for photography almost jumped off the pages. For those of us with relatively comfortable lives, it is hard to imagine being in such a hostile place, let alone combining our photography with perilous combat duties.

The article also extolled the virtues of Pentax DSLRs and lenses in a way that Pentax Ricoh Imaging never seems to manage. The Pentax K-5 and earlier K-7 are hard to beat in terms of durability, with their very effective dust and weather sealing and full magnesium bodies. That goes for the Pentax DA* lenses, too. Yet how many photographers are really aware of that? In AP we see full-page adverts showing the 'entry-level' K-30 beaded with moisture, but Alexander Jansen's words say so much more!

I poured a sandbag on my Pentax cameras and lenses, and then rinsed them off in the shower. I don't know whether Pentax Ricoh Imaging lacks the advertising budget or simply lacks imagination. Its inability to convey to the buying public the extreme durability of their DSLRs, not to mention the great handling, in a way that *really* captures the imagination is, I believe, a significant reason why it often ends up discounting hugely from the product launch price to promote sales. Perhaps the company might learn something from AP's article and also from the rock-music world, where the use of a particular guitar by an admired player sells far more of that instrument than any glossy advert alone.

Jim Brown, Kent

IT'S ALL ABOUT EASE OF USE

I read AP 16 February with great interest, particularly the comparison between the Canon EOS 6D and Nikon D600. There is no doubt that anyone who makes an investment in either of these models will end up with a superb camera that will

satisfy most needs and produce consistent and brilliant results in virtually every circumstance. However, I would take issue with the use of the term 'affordable'. While it is true that compared to models such as the Canon EOS 5D and Nikon D800, these new models are priced under £2,000 and

that price will drop over time, but this is a considerable investment for many amateur photographers – and for what?

I use a Nikon D300 and D7000, both of which produce wonderful results even when I push them to the limits of their dynamic range. For the most part this is rare, and for the majority of my shots I am more than happy. It was interesting to read Ogden Chesnutt's commentary on the last page of the same issue, which picks up this theme and surmises that camera manufacturers will eventually kill off DSLRs with cropped sensors. With the Canon EOS 6D and Nikon D600 currently costing twice the price of comparable crop-sensor DSLRs, I would surmise that camera manufacturers are more interested in increased profit margins than actually giving their customers camera facilities they can use on an everyday basis.

When it comes to considering a replacement for my Nikon D300, a full-frame sensor or more megapixels will not necessarily excite me, whereas a swivel screen, built-in Wi-Fi and GPS I can see as useful features. My plea to the manufacturers, then, is don't kill off APS-C-format DSLRs. Instead, give us features that improve ease of use and refine existing camera technology.

Mervyn G Marshall, Essex

You are right, Mervyn. These are still very expensive cameras, but 'affordable' is a relative term, and compared to other full-frame models the EOS 6D and Nikon D600 are almost free! – Damien Demolder, Editor

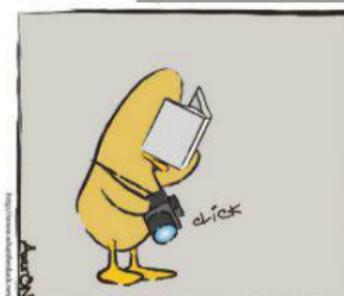
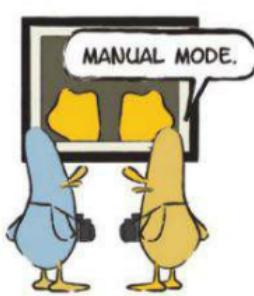


MINIMAL INPUT

Jon Pratt's letter (AP 23 February) regarding my letter of the week (AP 9 February) had the faint whiff of sarcasm. The black & white image (above) is an example of where Photoshop Elements 9 really did do 'all the work' while I sat at my PC clicking the mouse. Using a colour image, I gave a contrast boost via colour curves. I then applied an Elements black & white preset before adding some Unsharp Mask. It took about two minutes in all. And no, Jon, there isn't some special Photoshop upgrade available solely in my neck of the woods. My reference to Photoshop doing all the work was confined solely to mono, and I think this image goes some way to proving my point.

Tommy Turnbull, Tyne & Wear

What The Duck



A CLOSE-RUN THING

As someone who once battled with a Pentax K1000 and what seemed like a traffic cone-sized 300mm telephoto lens

WHITE ADVICE

I much enjoyed Heather Angel's helpful article about photographing snowdrops in AP 16 February. This time last year we were amazed by the plethora of snowdrops at The Vyne in Hampshire, and this shot (right) is of a small section of what greeted our eyes. Now, with the benefit of Heather's advice, I hope to go again and improve on previous effort! **Elisabeth Cox, Greater London**



Those are lovely, Elisabeth. Thank you – Damien Demolder, Editor

to take gig photographs, I'm more than glad I now have my Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ200 for that same purpose. That's why I fully agree with Richard Patrick regarding bridge cameras (*Letters*, AP 23 February), which produce great results in easily handled packages. It's the only superzoom digital camera I've used that gives supremely sharp handheld images at the 600mm end of the lens thanks to its superb image-stabilisation system. No wonder the FZ200 won Bridge Camera of the Year in the 2013 AP Awards.

I recently helped a friend cover his sister's wedding. He used a Nikon D90 with various lenses. When it came to having the images processed at a local lab, my friend's were splattered with dust spots thanks to dirt on his camera's sensor. The newlyweds were far from happy with the proof shots, particularly one in which a large black spot sat on the tip of the bride's nose. A rather lengthy retouching session by my pal saw the problem resolved, but he was none too pleased about it. Thanks to my FZ200's fixed lens, my own pictures were blemish-free. And only hours after the wedding, I handed the couple a set of (although I do say so myself) high-quality A4 prints with which they were thrilled.

At a larger size my mate's DSLR would have probably reigned supreme, but at A4 size there was very little difference in quality. In terms of technical ability, the gap between bridge cameras and DSLRs still exists, but it's getting to be a close-run thing.

Richard Riley, Tyne & Wear

DON'T JUST COVER THE PREMIER LEAGUE

It's always interesting to read reviews of the latest cameras, but it seems that only the premier brands get coverage in the photographic press. This makes choices somewhat limited to the higher-priced models, when there are smaller, lesser-known companies also making digital cameras, often at much lower prices.

For example, I thought Praktica went

out of business when Germany was reunified and the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist. I was somewhat surprised, while browsing the internet, to find that it has been producing digital cameras ever since, and its latest offering, an 18-million-pixel bridge camera with some very attractive features, has just been launched.

I would stress that I am in no way connected to the Praktica company, but was a fan of its film cameras until I went digital. It would be nice to find out how its latest offerings compare.

Ian McRae, Angus

You'll find that the modern Praktica company is quite different from that which made film SLRs years ago. Today the company sells, but doesn't make, its cameras. You're right, though, perhaps we should try to get some in for testing – Damien Demolder, Editor

YES (TO A) MINISTER

I took great pleasure in reading the letter of the week from Keith Longmore in AP 16 February. I think he has hit the button by highlighting Germany's Unfair Competition Act (UWG). If we are to maintain our high streets here as somewhere that people can shop and receive exceptional customer service, then I would recommend that we appeal to the Government to create a new ministerial post of Minister for the High Street.

I am an independent retailer – probably one of the last remaining in Scotland – with three full-time and two part-time staff in my team. The idea of the government taking a positive step to stop the decline and ultimate end of the high street would get my vote. This does not just mean photo retailers; it is every kind of shop we see on the high street.

What do we have to lose by having a new government post and a fair and reasonable law to help us all to prosper.

Alister H Walker, JRS Photo Hardware Ltd, via email

BACK CHAT

AP reader Ian Shore calls for all photographers to dust off their old film and start creating 'real' images

SOME 15 years ago I changed careers from a budding semi-professional photographer to that of another profession. During this period I have kept a loose interest in photography, but it is only within the past year that I have decided to attempt to become a professional photographer once again. Oh, how things have changed – and for the worse!

Having been taught photography using film, 35mm to 10x8in cameras and darkrooms, I am used to pressing the shutter release when I am confident I have the shot I want, processing the film carefully and methodically, and then, if the image is to be printed, spending time in the lab producing a quality print. All-in-all, it was a well-thought-out, well-prepared exercise that filtered out the technically good and artistically gifted photographer who would then go on to forge a successful career.

Nowadays, well, where do I begin? Many of today's breed of photographer (amateur or professional) do not deserve the title of photographer, in my opinion – a more accurate description would be 'graphic designer with a camera person'. I am astounded at how often I hear, or read, about how much a modern image is Photoshopped: to hear a 'photographer' say he is not concerned what the shot will come out like because he can fix it with his computer – or to have my photographer friend tell me of a conversation he had at the Olympics where a young student was filming the event with his DSLR and intended to obtain his photograph from a video still – is shocking!

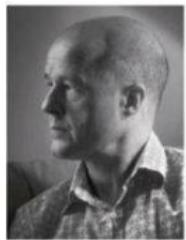
Where is the skill in today's photography? Worse is the fact that I no longer know if what I am looking at is actually real, because the vast proportion of images have had varying degrees of cosmetic surgery. If I were to give a roll of Fujichrome Velvia 50 and my Nikon F5 to many of the new breed of photographer, they would not be able to draw with light, hence they would not be a photographer. I think now is the time for the industry to start publishing 'real' images (images that could be created in a darkroom is the limit) and to label them as authentic, so we can see what can be produced in the camera and not in the computer.

As for me, I can assure you that while I am in Kathmandu, Nepal for a few weeks, I will have my lightmeter with me and I will press that shutter when I think I have a shot – and the resulting images will not be booked in for a nip and tuck.

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PHOTO INSIGHT

Andrew Sanderson discusses his shot of a jasmine plant taken through a window and the virtues of exploring your immediate surroundings for photographic opportunities



ANDREW SANDERSON

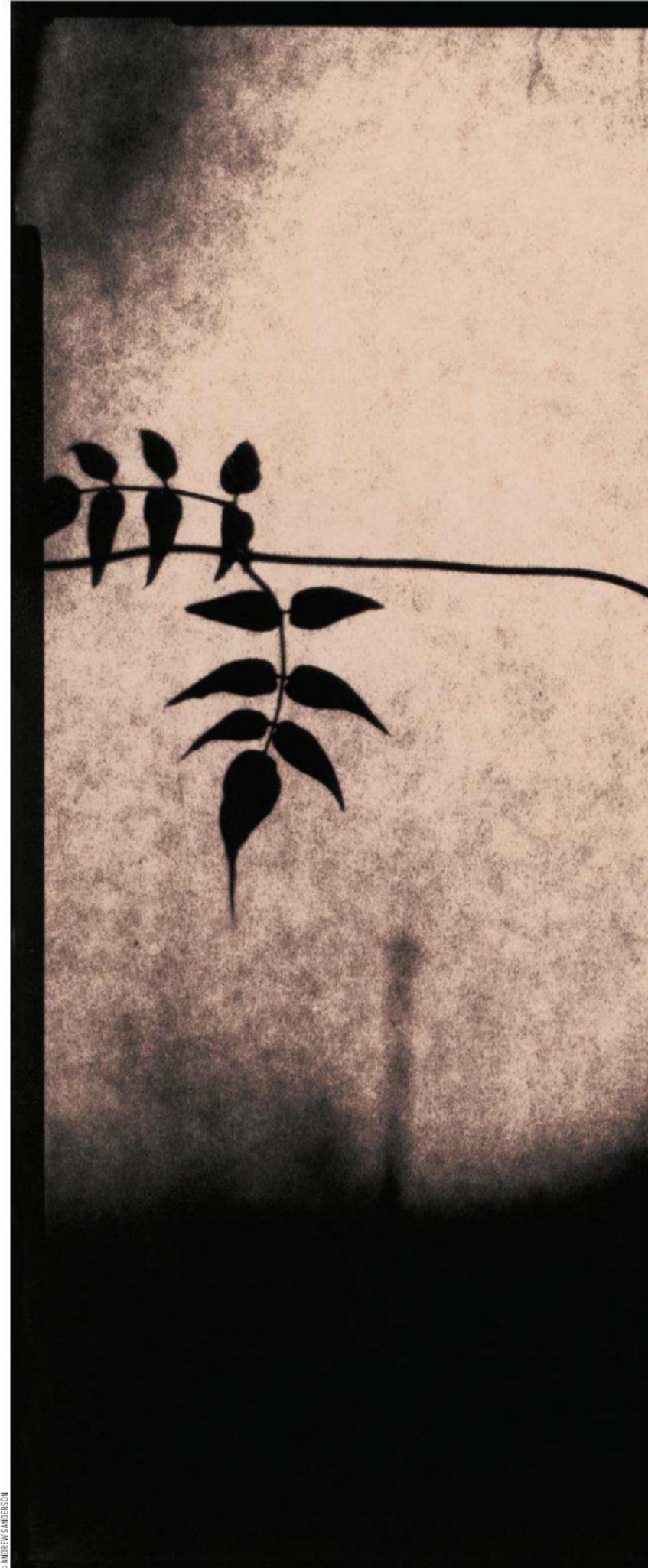
A renowned photographer, tutor, author and Ilford Master Printer, Andrew Sanderson offers practical tips on working with film and traditional darkroom techniques

THIS shot was taken around 13 years ago, when much of my time seemed to be spent running around after the children and picking up toys. I'm sure it's a scenario any parent of young children can relate to. At that time, I was necessarily producing a lot of photography around the home and I learned that just because you're faced with familiar surroundings, it doesn't mean you can't produce worthwhile images. When you look through the viewfinder and isolate certain areas, they become something in themselves.

I ended up producing a book on the subject called *Home Photography*, which included a lot of the material I had produced during that time. This is one of those images from that period. We used to have a beautiful jasmine plant on the kitchen windowsill that had lovely shapes and curves. It had a real graphic character. I had already photographed it on a number of occasions, but this time I used a 5x4in camera and a single sheet of white paper in the background. That's where the mottling texture comes from. The plant is silhouetted against that surface and you can also see parts of the garden just out of focus in the background. This is the result of the image being shot with a wide-open aperture. I then printed up the shot as a lith print, hence the unusual colour cast.

Initially, it was the shapes that drew me to the image. There's a lovely curve in the stem on the right-hand side that forms a little arch through which the stem travels in mid-air. It's those simple graphic shapes that really appeal to me. I also appreciate shadows and silhouettes, and those elements always feature strongly in my work. In this image there is the graphic nature of the plant and then the abstract nature of the background coming together to form one overall image.

Lith developer was originally made for



© ANDREW SANDERSON

Andrew Sanderson
was talking to
Oliver Atwell



'The joy of this image of jasmine is that we have the silhouette against an abstract background that has a series of shapes and hill-like formations'

processing a particular type of film that produced high-contrast negatives. It was used in the graphic arts industry for copying things such as lettering and line drawing. It's a very active and vigorous developer, and that's what creates such a high contrast.

When lith developer is greatly diluted it works in a very different way. You expose the print – I believe it's around 10x the exposure you'd give a standard print – and put it in the lith developer. It takes a long time for the print to come through, sometimes up to 20mins. Something then occurs on the chemical level, which accelerates the rate of the developer. The development then becomes faster and faster, and before you know it the blacks come in. You have to take it out of the developer quickly and place it in the stop bath to arrest the development and keep it at that point.

The result is a beautiful separation between dark blacks and creamy highlights. It is important to pull the print out of the developer at exactly the right time, at something known as the 'snatch point'.

The first lith prints I ever saw were produced by Bob Carlos Clarke. He really mastered the technique and knew exactly how to achieve the desired images. He experimented with lots of different types of paper and achieved some extraordinary prints.

Talking about lith prints really hammers home my love affair with alternative processes. I've always found it odd that I could produce images using large-format cameras and the photographs would be sterile and a little boring, yet a drop in the technical quality gives a significant increase in aesthetic quality. I think the reason for this is because your imagination makes up the difference. That's when magic and mystery come into the process. Somehow, it brings the image to life.

The joy of this image of jasmine is that we have the silhouette against an abstract background that has a series of shapes and hill-like formations. The image is suggestive: it doesn't spell things out in the same way as a large-format negative would. When there's too much detail, your eye tends to move all over the place. Sometimes detail can actually be a distracting element. **AP**



If you would like to read more about paper negatives, Andrew's book ***Paper Negative Photography*** is available from www.blurb.com, price £15

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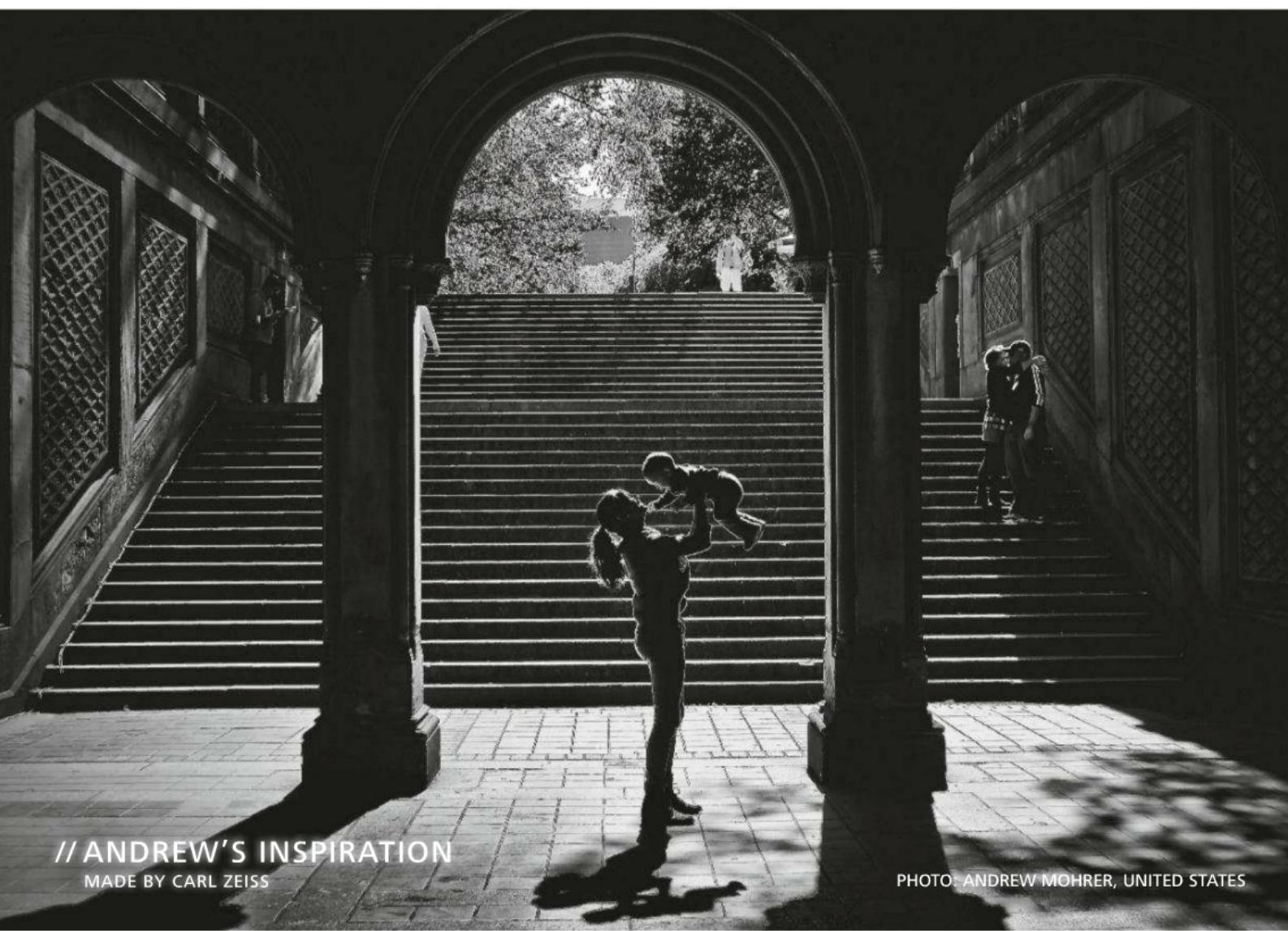
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Simple floral still-life images can be produced all year round using the kind of lighting found around the home



LEARN
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Still-life flowers

The Amateur Photographer *Masterclass* with Andrew Sydenham

AP's resident photographer **Andrew Sydenham** shows four readers how to create simple still-life images of flowers using the most basic of tools. **Oliver Atwell** joins them

HERE at AP we often talk about how important it is not to let the winter blues get in the way of your creative output. But it's not always easy. Few of us fancy venturing out into the biting cold and even fewer of us have access to studios and professional lighting. However, that's no excuse not to have fun exploring all the opportunities to be found in your own home. Take a look around your home and you'll soon see that there are countless little pictures that leap out at you. With this month's *Masterclass* we are going to take things a little further. We're going to wait for the evening light to fall, close the curtains and switch on a lamp. That

one cheap light source will provide you with a number of photographs.

'The important thing to understand about a studio environment is that essentially it is no different from the living room in your own home,' says AP's resident photographer Andrew Sydenham, as he gathers our four readers into the office basement studio. 'It's just a room with one or more lights. While the lights in a studio are designed to give you maximum control over the output, that doesn't mean the lights in your home cannot be used in much the same way. Today, we're going to explore that idea using one of the most basic subjects

you can photograph – flowers.'

The four AP readers will be creating their own still-life images using just a few basic tools, all of which are immediately accessible to anyone at home wishing to try it themselves. Using just a few techniques, interesting images can be produced no matter what the weather chooses to throw at the outside world.

'We'll be exploring several ideas,' says Andrew. 'Today we'll use Anglepoise lamps, torches and simple backdrops. We'll also look at the right kinds of lenses to use, such as macro, and see how we can create exciting monochrome images. These are all techniques that people can replicate themselves at home.'

And with those words ringing in their ears, our readers set themselves up in front of one of the simply constructed miniature studio sets and get ready to create beautiful still-life images.

Your AP expert... **Andrew Sydenham**



Andrew Sydenham has been a London-based studio photographer for more than 20 years, working for various editorial and advertising clients. He has contributed to more than 100 books and magazines. He provides product photography for *Amateur Photographer* and *What Digital Camera*, and is passionate about lighting techniques and equipment. Andrew also teaches on Foundation in Photography and Foundation in Digital Photography SPI courses.

ANN COOK

The AP readers... **Jill Beeton**



Jill uses a Canon EOS 450D with a Canon EF 18-200mm lens. 'I had a lot of fun,' she says. 'There are loads of new ideas that I'll be taking away with me.'

Ann Cook



Ann's equipment comprises a Canon EOS 60D and a Canon 105mm macro lens. 'It's been a really memorable day,' she says. 'It was great fun and I learned a lot.'

Greg Lambert



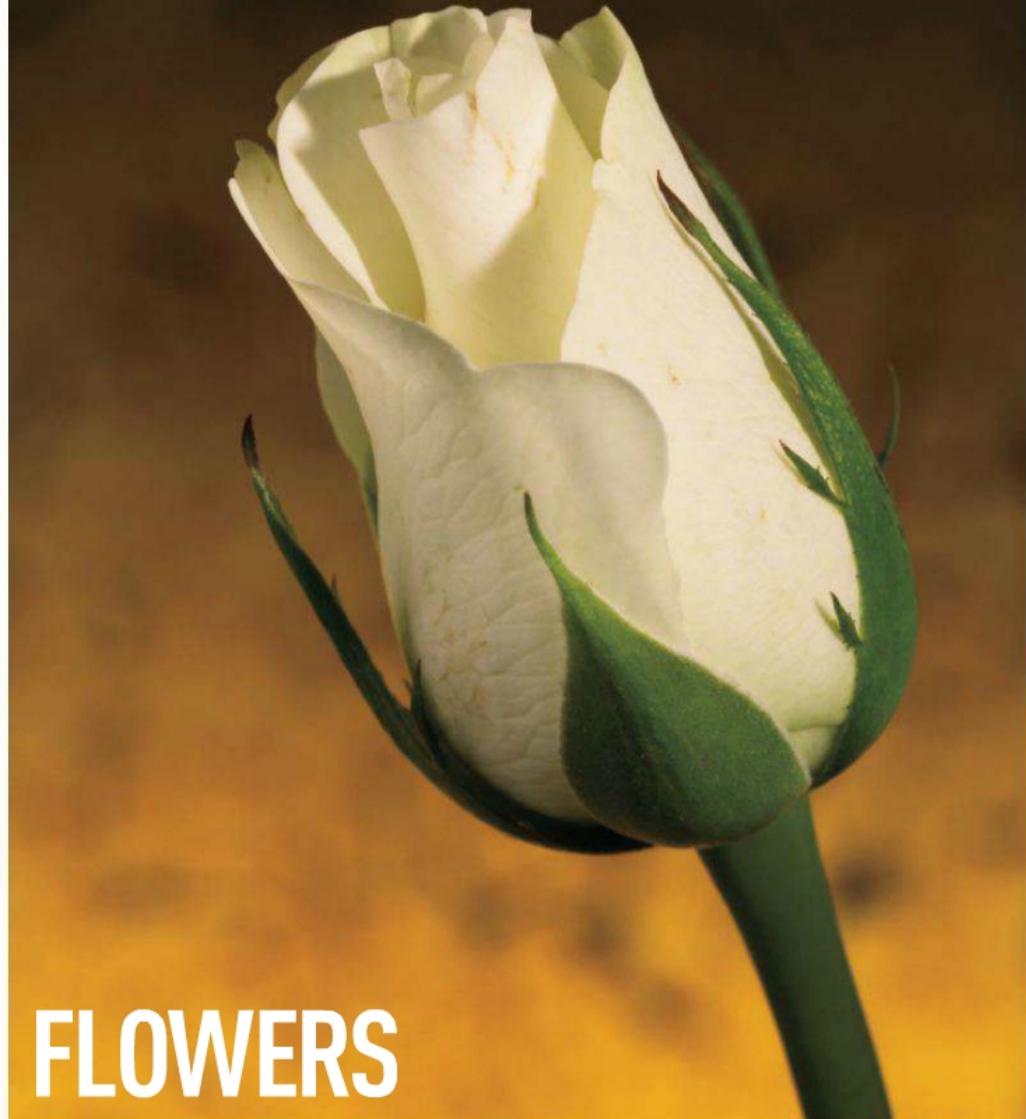
Greg uses a Canon EOS 5D Mark III and Canon EF 135mm lens. 'No matter what you think you know, you always come away with something new,' says Greg.

Susi Luard



On the day, Susi used a Canon EOS 5D Mark II and a Canon 105mm macro lens. 'I learned a few tricks, like putting the subjects tighter together for composition and using black acrylic for reflections,' she says.

'The complex shapes of many of these flowers means we can create something, that is not only classic, but also abstract'



FLOWERS

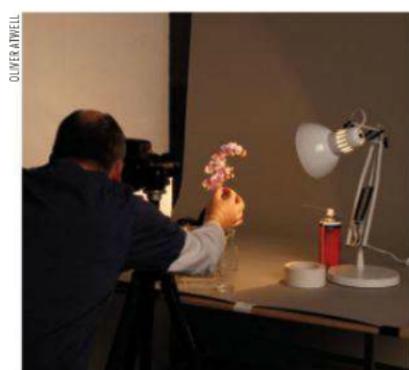
FLOWERS have always been a popular subject for painters and photographers. From the beautiful painterly representations of sunflowers by Vincent van Gogh to the masterfully lit floral still-life images produced by Robert Mapplethorpe, flowers have provided artists with endless inspiration. Crucially, flowers are a subject that can be shot all year round. The endless species on offer provide ample opportunity to create classic monochrome images as well as something a little more abstract.

'Flowers are a great subject to work with because they are so versatile,' says Andrew. 'We can explore colour, texture and the principles of lighting. The complex shapes of many of these flowers means we can create something, that's not only classic, but also abstract. If we get close enough into the subject using a macro lens, we can begin to see the fractal patterns and beautiful textures emerging.'

The varying shapes and colours on offer can lead to stunning images, but it's important to understand that there is potential for much more than just a simple

portrait. It's always worth experimenting.

'There's nothing wrong with creating a simple image using just some flowers and a basic light source,' says Andrew. 'But you should also note that it's possible to create something a little different. Flowers have a character and that should be explored through photography. In the same way that you create a portrait of a person in order to reveal a hidden quality, you should aim to do the same with flowers.'



Backgrounds

Ensure that your background and surface complement your flower. There are various materials you can use, such as coloured card, cloth or even some old wallpaper. Experiment with colour combinations or even consult a basic colour chart to see which colours work together.



EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Lenses: Macro and one zoom lens, such as a 85-100mm or a 70-200mm

Flowers: Of any variety

Tripod: This is crucial, as you may find yourself working with long shutter speeds due to low light

Materials for backgrounds:

Try cloth, card or wallpaper

Even surface: Use something such as a kitchen table

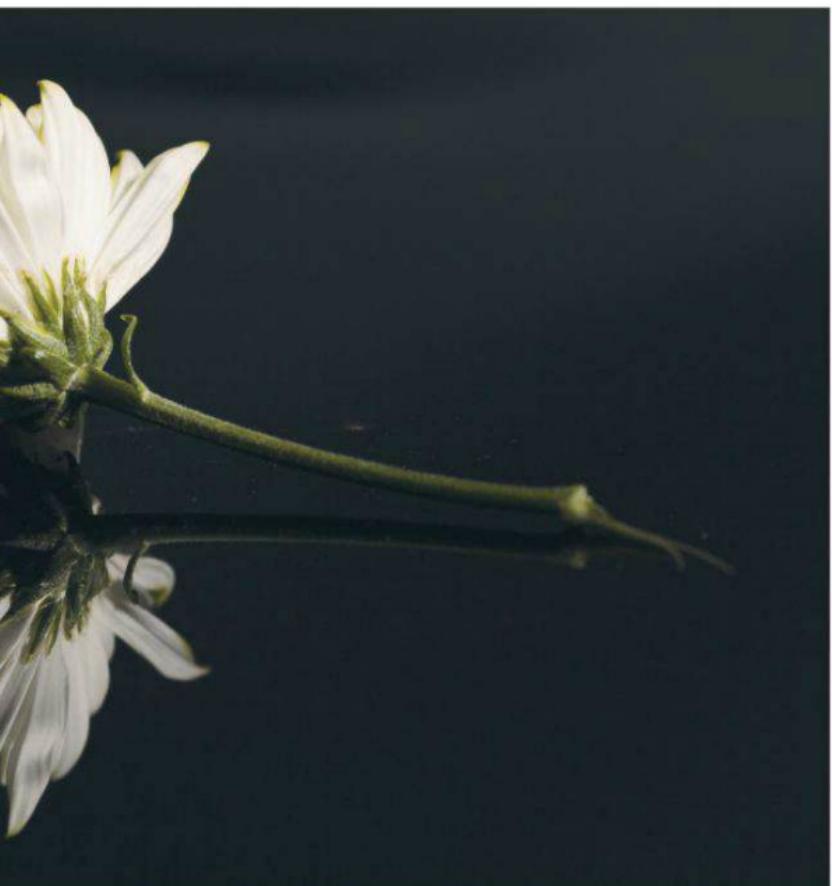
Basic lighting: An Anglepoise lamp is ideal

Snoot, softbox and reflector:

All these can be made at home out of easily obtainable materials

MACRO

WHAT makes using a macro lens ideal for floral still-life studies is the fact that it allows you to get closer to an already small subject and explore the tiny details that make up a flower. Otherwise, with a standard lens such as an 80mm, you'd have to use an extension tube. An extension tube, or ring, is placed between the sensor and the lens, and allows you to focus in closer. This is a cheaper alternative to buying an expensive macro lens.



Lenses

A wideangle lens would not be ideal for the kinds of shots taken during this *Masterclass*, so Andrew suggests using either an 85-100mm or a 70-200mm lens. A zoom lens will allow you to move in closer or further away from your subject without shifting your position.

Reflections

A nice effect that you can employ is to use reflections. Place some black acrylic or a black cloth underneath some glass on a table and compose your shot so you get both the flower head and reflection into the shot.

USING A TORCH

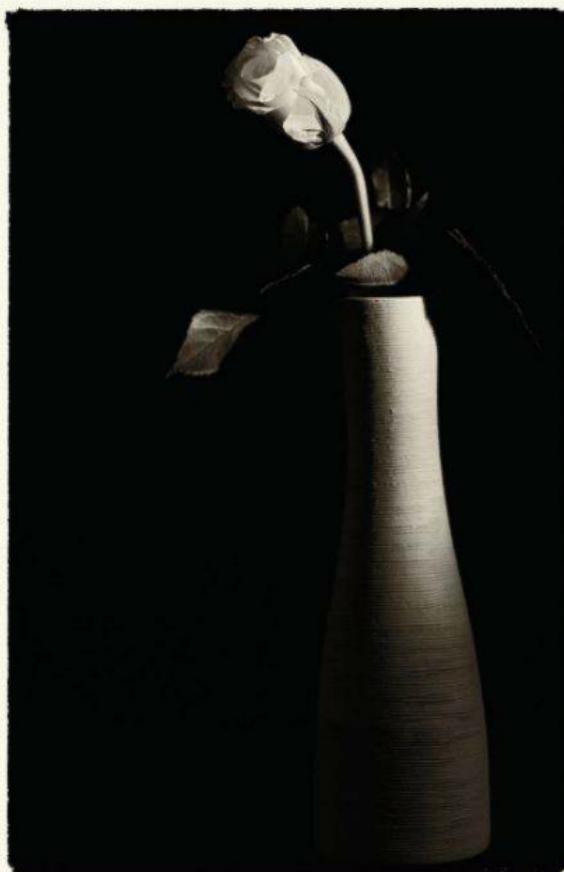
ONE TECHNIQUE that Andrew suggests is to use a small torch. This will create unconventional lighting that is seldom seen in flower portraits.

'Using a torch gives you control over the lighting and allows you to illuminate just a small section,' says Andrew. 'In the example below, Jill has illuminated the head of the rose by moving the light around the flower head. This is a form of light painting that is not often seen when shooting flowers.'

Jill set an exposure of 8secs and programmed the aperture to be f/9. She then painted the head of the rose moving from the front petals to the back.

'Using a torch gives you control over the lighting and allows you to illuminate a small section'

GREG LAMBERT



MONO

FLOWERS are, of course, colourful subjects, but sometimes they can benefit from either being shot in or converted to monochrome. This removes the distraction of colour and allows the viewer to concentrate on the intricate shapes and textures of the flower.

'When shooting a subject that is going to be converted into monochrome, you will start to deal with the issue of low-key lighting,' says Andrew. 'It's simple to arrange. All you need is a single light source and a reflector. You should aim to place your light source around 2-3ft [60-90cm] away and position your reflector on the opposite side. However, you should only use the reflector if you want the shadowy side to retain some detail.'



JILL BEEFON





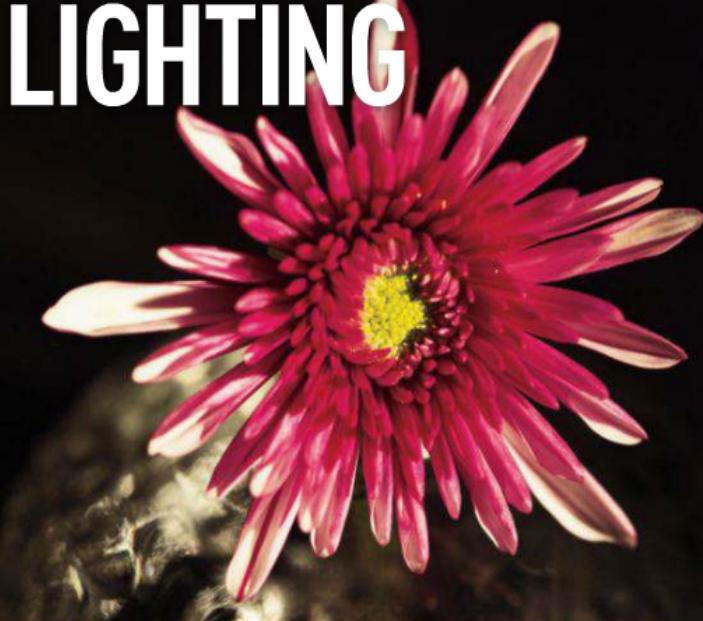
GOING ABSTRACT

AS A MACRO lens allows you to get close to your subject, you can begin to explore the more abstract elements of a flower subject. In the image above, Ann has honed in on the green sepals. It's an unusual approach, but one that works brilliantly. The fine hairs and strong colours are, in themselves, interesting subjects and more than worth of exploring through macro. Importantly, it's an image that is relatively abstract, but one that gives you enough information to know what you're looking at.

Would you like to take part?

EVERY month we invite three to five AP readers to join one of our experts on a free assignment over the course of a day. The experts include **Tom Mackie** (landscapes), **Cathal McNaughton** (documentary and photo essays), **Michael Bosanko** (low-light photography) and **Luke Massey** (wildlife). Our next confirmed Masterclass will be with wildlife photographer **Luke Massey**. If you would like to take part, email oliver_atwell@ipcmedia.com for details. Please remember to state which *Masterclass* you would like to attend and make sure you include your name, address, email address, daytime telephone number, some words about your work, the kit you use and three or four of your images.

LIGHTING



THE READERS used continuous lighting from such things as Anglepoise lamps and spotlights.

'We're just looking to create flower portraits using the most basic means of lighting,' says Andrew. 'At the end of the day these lights are just bulbs that can be switched on and off, just like a desk lamp or an overhead light. A simple household lamp can be controlled in much the same way as a studio light. You can control these

by knocking together makeshift snoots, which will focus the light, and lightboxes, which will diffuse the light. When you've done that, you're halfway to producing successful flower portraits at home using your own lights.'

Andrew also points out that it is important that the light is placed in such a way that it resembles the direction of sunlight. The light should be placed at an angle shining down onto the subject.

Reflectors

The best way to establish a more balanced distribution of light is to use a reflector. A white reflector will bounce light back onto a subject, which will help soften areas that would otherwise be quite dark, and will act as a general fill light. These can easily be found in any home as they can be made out of paper or even an old piece of polystyrene.

Snoots

One of the more useful tools you can attach to your light source is what's called a snoot. This is a tube that fits over a studio light and which can be constructed cheaply and quickly out of black card. This is particularly handy when shooting a small subject such as a flower, as it will concentrate the light onto a smaller area. There will be very little light spill.

Low-key lighting and the histogram

Before switching on your light source, set your camera to manual-exposure mode and your f-stop to the widest aperture possible. You should then close the aperture down further and further until any ambient light has disappeared. Check the histogram on the back of the camera to ensure that the graph is pushed towards the left-hand side of the chart.



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Toughing it out

Discover how to achieve amazing photos in adverse conditions with professional photographer **David Shaw**

DESPITE seeing magazines, postcards, and advertisements full of images of sunshine and clear-blue skies, reality rarely plays out perfectly. The coast of my home state of Alaska is drenched by rain for most of the year. The forested islands are perpetually clothed in mist, while the glaciers radiate blue in the overcast. Yet to believe the cruise-ship advertising and magazine spreads, you'd think it was as sunny as the south of Spain.

As photographers and travellers we are subjected to the reality, and if we want to make images, regardless of the weather, we have to be prepared. Cold, tropical humidity, saltwater, wild places, and river trips all hold their photographic challenges, risks and

rewards. Knowing what you need when you face these situations is the best way to get the most out of your photography.

COLD

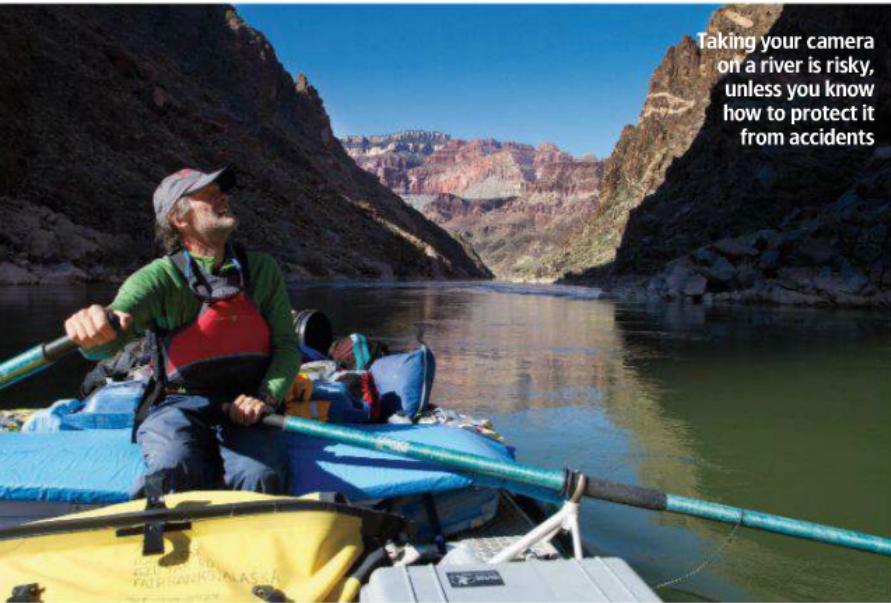
Living in Alaska, I've come to know the cold much more intimately than I would have ever thought possible. Winter can be brutal on humans and cameras, but there are elements to a northern winter so sublime that I'm lured out, no matter what the temperature.

When the aurora borealis is sweeping across the clear winter sky, sheets of green and purple shimmer in an astral breeze and bathe the snowy hills in an ethereal light. The display

Above: Protect your camera kit from the dust, cold or wet, and achieve better photos in return for your care

Right: David Shaw dressed in his cold-weather gear, which is perfect for his native Alaska





Taking your camera on a river is risky, unless you know how to protect it from accidents

could last hours or only minutes, so slipping off to bed is out of the question. However, it gets very cold – the thermometer can drop down to -35°C – so it's essential to take the necessary precautions.

Out in a cold Alaskan night, I wear twice what I think necessary. It is easy to take a layer off, but impossible to wish one into existence when the chill seeps through. I start with a set of expedition-weight fleece or long woollen underwear followed by a pair of fleece trousers and a sweater. On the outside goes a pair of heavily insulated down or synthetic-filled trousers and an expedition-grade 850-fill down parka with a full hood and fleece-lined pockets. On my head goes a windproof hat, while a neck gaiter provides a place to tuck my nose out of the cold and to keep my breath away from the camera's lens. My hands are clad in a pair of light fleece gloves that provide sufficient dexterity to operate the controls of my camera. When

I'm not shooting, a pair of expedition mittens goes over the gloves. My feet are covered in two layers of socks, while my shoes are light winter boots covered with a pair of waterproof, insulated overboots. With that, I'm ready to face whatever the cold can throw at me. However, the camera is not.

Cold is hard on electronics and moving parts. Even batteries, *particularly* batteries, have a difficult time when the mercury drops. Due to the vagaries of electricity, the colder it gets, the less of a battery's stored charge is capable of being released. On cold shoots I take a spare battery or two, which I place in a warm pocket. Kept close to my body, when needed they go straight into the camera while the used batteries are placed back in the pocket. When re-warmed, the spent batteries will be good for another return to the camera.

One of the greatest risks to camera equipment comes when we return to the warmth of the indoors. Ever noticed how a



FIVE TIPS FOR YOUR EQUIPMENT

- 1 Extend your battery life by turning off the auto-review function on your camera.
- 2 Minimise dust on your camera's sensor by switching lenses only in clean, protected areas (even inside your jacket).
- 3 Carry large resealable bags with you. They are perfect for protecting your equipment from a sudden downpour or big differences between indoor and outdoor temperatures.
- 4 Keep a clean cotton bandana around for wiping mist, condensation or spray from your cameras and lenses.
- 5 Get a rain cover for your camera bag. They don't weigh much and will be invaluable if you are caught out in a storm.





Remember to bring
spare batteries
when you're
shooting once-in-
a-lifetime events,
such as this aurora
borealis

cold drink on a hot day develops drops of condensation? That same effect can happen to your cameras and lenses if you bring a camera straight from the cold into a warm place. It's easy to avoid, though. Before you head inside, put all your cold cameras and lenses into resealable bags. Once inside, wait for them to return to room temperature before you remove them.

RIVERS

Rivers and photography go together like paddles and boats. The juxtaposition of water and earth, the curves of the stream, the rocks, cliffs and rapids provide tension and graphic elements to images. Rivers are the authors of the landscape.

A year ago, I spent three weeks rafting down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Unlike my home rivers in Alaska that I paddle in an open canoe, the Colorado requires big sturdy rafts. Camping equipment, food and other gear must be packed away securely in dry bags or boxes.

The Colorado River is a challenging place for photographers. The water is silty and even small rapids can soak unprotected equipment in an instant. There are a couple of options to keep your gear safe and dry. The inexpensive choice is a river-rafter's dry bag. Dry bags have either roll-top closures, or a zip-top (think of a large resealable sandwich bag). On the Grand Canyon, we had a raft flip in Crystal Falls and several bags were underwater for hours as we recovered and righted the raft. All the roll-top dry bags in the boat were penetrated by at least some water (some were thoroughly soaked), while the zip-top bags were completely dry.

Despite the ease of waterproof bags, the best strategy for keeping your camera and lenses dry is to invest in a sturdy hardback case. There are boxes available that are made of thick, tough (and heavy) plastic, are fully airtight and completely waterproof. In the Grand Canyon I took a single hardback case with enough space

RESOURCES

There are thousands of resources available to the travelling photographer, but here are a three places to start your research before you head out:

GoogleEarth This is a great place to scope out your itinerary, as 3D visualisations from ground level can even provide a remarkably true-to-life vision of the landscape.

Local groups Most countries have conservation or historical societies with great information. An internet search will point you in the right direction. Many organisations will be happy to answer questions.

Social networks Travel social networks like the Matador Network have articles, photos and travel stories from all over the world. They are also great places to reach out to locals willing to suggest spots to visit or places to stay.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT CLOTHING

EXTREME COLD

In the cold, your extremities are the first things to suffer. Hands and feet that aren't sufficiently protected from the air can lose dexterity, grow painful and even suffer from frostbite. I often had trouble keeping my feet warm until I bought a pair of insulated overshoes. These waterproof and rugged boots go over any other footwear and are extremely warm with solid traction on slippery terrain.

RAIN

There is no perfect rain jacket. In high-humidity environments Gore-Tex and other breathable fabrics do not work, and the only options are to get wet or wear fully watertight gear. When I'm not moving around much, and so not sweating, I'll wear rubberised rain gear designed for commercial fishermen. However, on hikes or while active, I rely on lightweight, breathable rain gear.

HEAT AND HUMIDITY

In the tropics, travellers are keen to dress in as few clothes as possible but still need to stay covered to keep from being burned by the tropical sun. My favourite shirts are light, and breathable, but provide great sun protection.

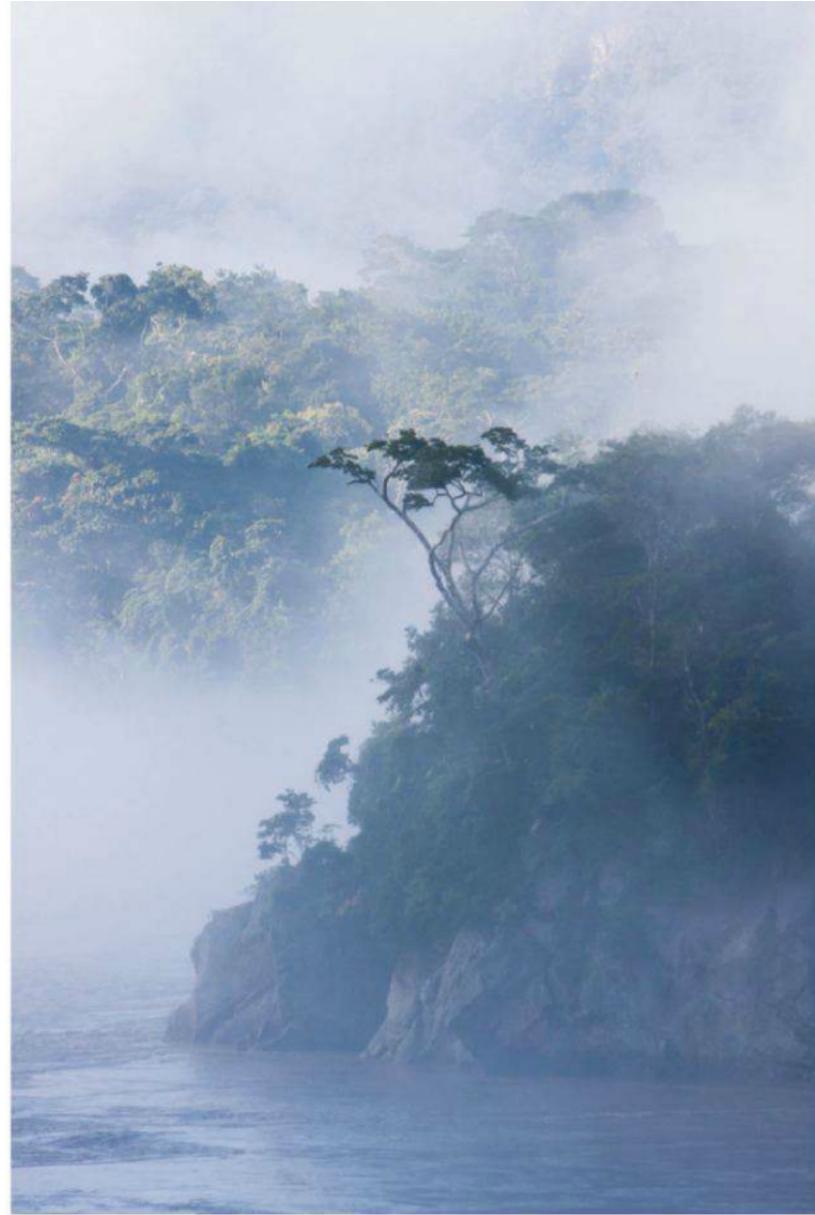


for my DSLR, a 70-200mm f/2.8 lens, a wideangle zoom and assorted accessories. Dozens, possibly hundreds of times, waves broke over the boat, soaking and even submerging everything, but I didn't worry about my camera.

HUMIDITY

Humidity is insidious. It can penetrate deep into cameras and lenses causing corrosion, fogging, mould and irreparable damage. I learned this the hard way during my first extended trip to the Amazon. At first, I didn't notice that anything was going wrong. My camera (a manual 35mm SLR) was functioning fine and I was happily snapping photos and storing away rolls of used film. A month into the trip I noticed the film-advance was stiff and required more force to move. By the end of the three-month stay, that problem was the least of my worries. Rust was visible on the exterior of the camera, the shutter mechanism was slow and unreliable, and my lenses – all of them – had fogged over with internal condensation.

If you are only going to the tropics for a few days or a week, you'll probably be fine. Good-quality equipment should be resilient enough to handle a bit of humidity. It's when trips extend into the weeks or months that precautions must be taken. Your first investment should be a hardback case or other fully airtight container. It needs



to be big enough so that each piece of equipment can fit in individually. The next thing you need is a chemical desiccant to absorb moisture and dehumidify the air. By placing the desiccant in an airtight case with your camera equipment you can keep the moisture from building up. Alternate your gear, about 12 hours for every 36, and you are unlikely to have corrosion problems.

If space or weight limitations prevent you taking a hardback case, then large resealable plastic bags will work in a pinch, but bring a bunch and double them up.

Speaking of plastic bags, you should carry these anyway. If you happen to be staying in a place where there is air conditioning, the cold-weather condensation effect will happen in reverse. When you go outside with cool camera equipment from being indoors, your kit will quickly fog over in the warm outdoor air. If you are heading out to shoot, plan ahead so there is enough time for your gear to adjust to the heat.

SALTWATER

Photography around the world's oceans holds many of the same risks to equipment as in the tropics. Ocean air tends to be humid and the added presence of salt exacerbates corrosion.

I've worked as a guide on several voyages to the Southern Oceans and Antarctica. On those trips, I spend a lot of time shooting from the deck of the ship or from a Zodiac

skiff in windy and wet conditions. Saltwater spray and splash are inevitable, and managing it requires some care.

Ship-based trips, like my voyages to Antarctica, do not require the use of a hardback case because there is always a warm and dry place to get my equipment. However, around oceans you'll need to get the salt off your equipment. When you return from a day's shooting, take a soft, and very lightly damp cloth (with fresh water) and wipe down the exterior of all your gear. The cloth should not be so damp as to leave droplets, just enough to remove the fine crystals of salt that will be forming on cameras and lenses. Be sure to completely rinse this cloth with fresh water between uses.

WILDERNESS

When I refer to wilderness, I mean the big open places of the world – roadless, unpeopled, and, well, wild. During the summer, I guide trips into remote areas of Alaska. Paddling, basecamp and backpacking trips are the common ways to explore the wilds, and photographers have a few things they need to keep in mind.

Wilderness trips are highly restrictive when it comes to gear. Almost all the trips I lead rely on travel in small aeroplanes to get us to and from our destinations. These planes are small and are usually unable to carry all the weight we'd like. First priorities

are the essentials: tents, food, stoves, sleeping bags, clothing and first-aid kits. Only once all that is packed can we start to think about photography.

Then, of course, there is the trip itself. Backpacking requires that everything from your clothes to your camera must be carried on your back, day after day. River trips offer a bit more flexibility since the boats carry more equipment, but space and weight are still limited. Basecamp trips are the most flexible when it comes to gear, but limitations of planes remain. Regardless of the type of trip, a minimalist attitude is mandatory.

My kit for extended backpacking trips is simple and very basic: a Canon EOS 5D Mark III with a 24–105mm lens, an ultra-light tripod, a few extra batteries and memory cards. River trips are a bit easier. My kit for the Grand Canyon is typical: a digital SLR with a wideangle zoom (usually a 17–40) a 70–200mm f/2.8 with a 1.4x teleconverter, a tripod, a flash, a high-end point-and-shoot camera and related accessories. Vitally important is the hardback case and dry bags to keep all my gear safe and dry. I've guided photography-specific basecamp trips where I carried every lens and accessory, including two bodies, 500mm f/4 and, 70–200mm f/2.8 lenses, 1.4x and 2x teleconverters, mid-range and wideangle zooms, gimbal-headed tripods and more. More often, however, I'll pare that back based on the carrying capacity of the plane we'll be using, the length of the trip and, of course, my photographic priorities.

There is more to the wilderness than what equipment to take. Photography in the world's wild places requires an open mental perspective. Things rarely go as planned in the wild. The weather turns nasty, the wind blows, the river floods. As photographers, we have to be able to roll with those punches and adapt. Journeys into the wild are stories to be told, and sometimes those imperfect trips make the most compelling tales.

AND FINALLY...

It often seems like the world is out to destroy our valuable photography equipment through cold, heat and moisture. Yet with preparation and the right equipment, there is no place too harsh for photography. And it's those most challenging places that offer the greatest opportunity. Plan, prepare, think – and then go shoot. **AP**

Above left: Raging currents can claim your camera, or spot the lens with unsightly water

Above right: When travelling to remote locations, take extra care when planning your shoot

Below: In some extreme environments, a second camera may be a good idea



EDITOR'S
CHOICE

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The use of black & white enhances the geometric shapes and lines created by shooting up into the ceiling detail. This is a great architecture shot – *Debbi Allen, deputy editor*

1



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2



Mark Sykes West Yorkshire

Mark has been interested in photography for a number of years, mainly taking photos while on holiday. However, all that changed in 2005 when he bought his first DSLR and began taking his photography more seriously. One of his favourite aspects of the hobby is that it gives him a reason to travel around the world, and he particularly enjoys shooting landscapes in the USA. 'They interest me more than UK landscapes,' he says. Mark has a knack for shooting architecture, as demonstrated on these pages. To see more of his images, visit his website at www.marksykesphotography.co.uk.

30 St Mary Axe

1 Mark has expertly composed this image from inside London's Gherkin, with the building's 'eye' sitting right on the thirds line
Nikon D800, 24-70mm, 1/5sec at f/11, ISO 100, tripod, cable release

Daily Express Building

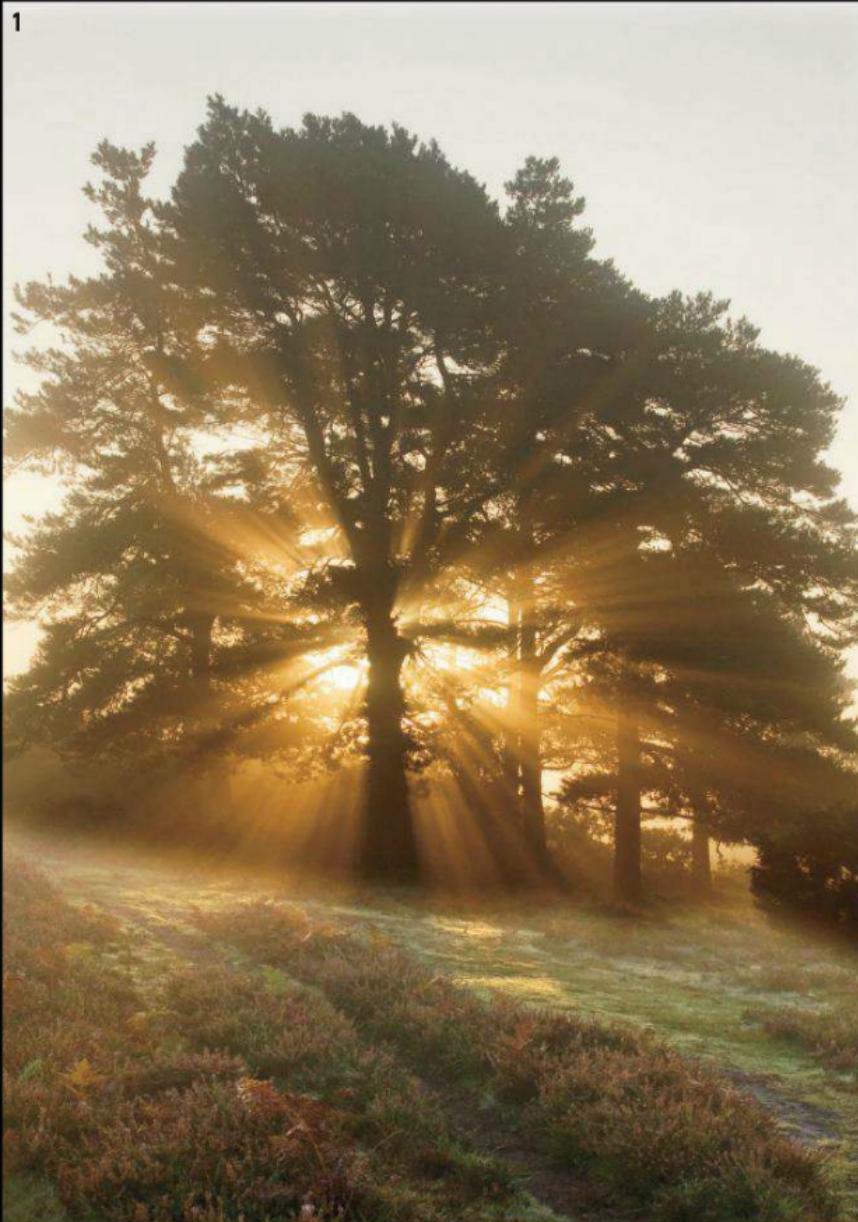
2 The ultra-wideangle provided by the lens exaggerates the unusual perspective in this image of a helical staircase
Nikon D800, 14-24mm, 2secs at f/8, ISO 100, tripod, cable release

Westminster Central Hall

3 The sepia tone complements the ornate grandeur of the building's interior, while the curves add a slightly surreal edge
Nikon D800, 14-24mm, 0.6secs at f/8, ISO 100, tripod, cable release



1



2



Morning glory

1 The positioning and angle of view were key here in order to achieve the light shining through the tree's branches

Sony Alpha 700, 16-80mm, 1/60sec at f/16, tripod, cable release

Dog walker

2 John has handled the contrasting light very adeptly to create this gorgeous woodland shot

Sony Alpha 700, 16-80mm, 1/60sec at f/11, tripod, cable release

John Lynch West Sussex

John's photographs have been featured in AP's *Reader Spotlight* pages in the past, and it is a pleasure to welcome him back with another selection of outstanding images. John got into photography through taking pictures of his show dogs, and has since developed a great love for photographing the natural world. 'I love being able to record a scene or event as a memory for ever,' he says. He is currently spending much of his time travelling around the world.





Forest floor

3 The colours in this image really bring it to life, with the sunlight giving the greens of the forest a vivid hue
Sony Alpha 700, 16-80mm, 1/60sec at f/11, tripod, cable release

Summer leads into autumn

4 John says the combination of light and atmosphere transformed an average scene into a magical one
Sony Alpha 700, 16-80mm, 1/30sec at f/16, tripod, cable release

Spring morning

5 'Backlighting gave the spring beech leaves an ethereal glow against the dark background,' says John
Sony Alpha 700, 16-80mm, 1/60sec at f/11, tripod, cable release





1 Women's centre, Tamil Nadu

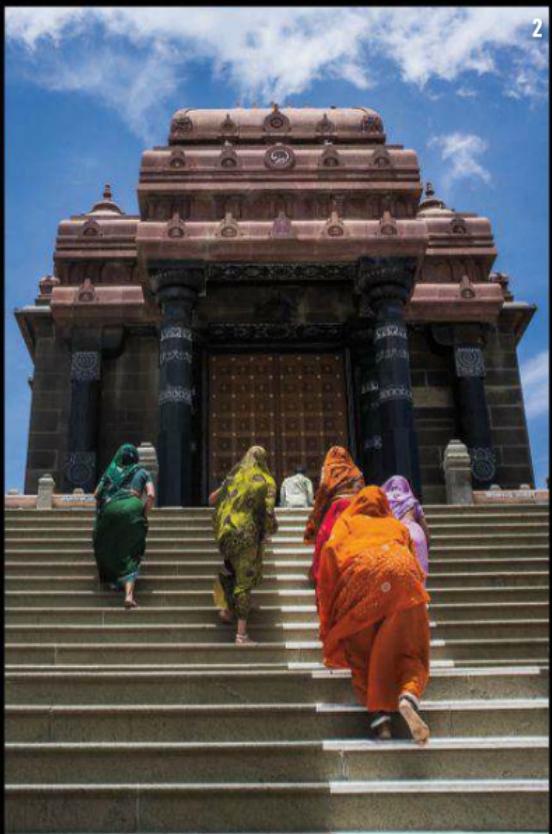
1 Eric has compensated well for the strong light from the window, resulting in a balanced exposure
Fujifilm FinePix X100, 23mm, 1/60sec at f/2, ISO 500

Temple on Vivekananda

2 The beautiful colours of the women's saris stand out vividly against the steps and the temple
Fujifilm FinePix X100, 23mm, 1/250sec at f/16, ISO 200

Primary school, Tamil Nadu

3 'The aperture of f/2 gave me a limited depth of field to carry so many elements,' says Eric, on creating this complex, challenging image
Fujifilm FinePix X100, 23mm, 1/60sec at f/2.0, ISO 400



2



3

Eric Lomax

Lincolnshire

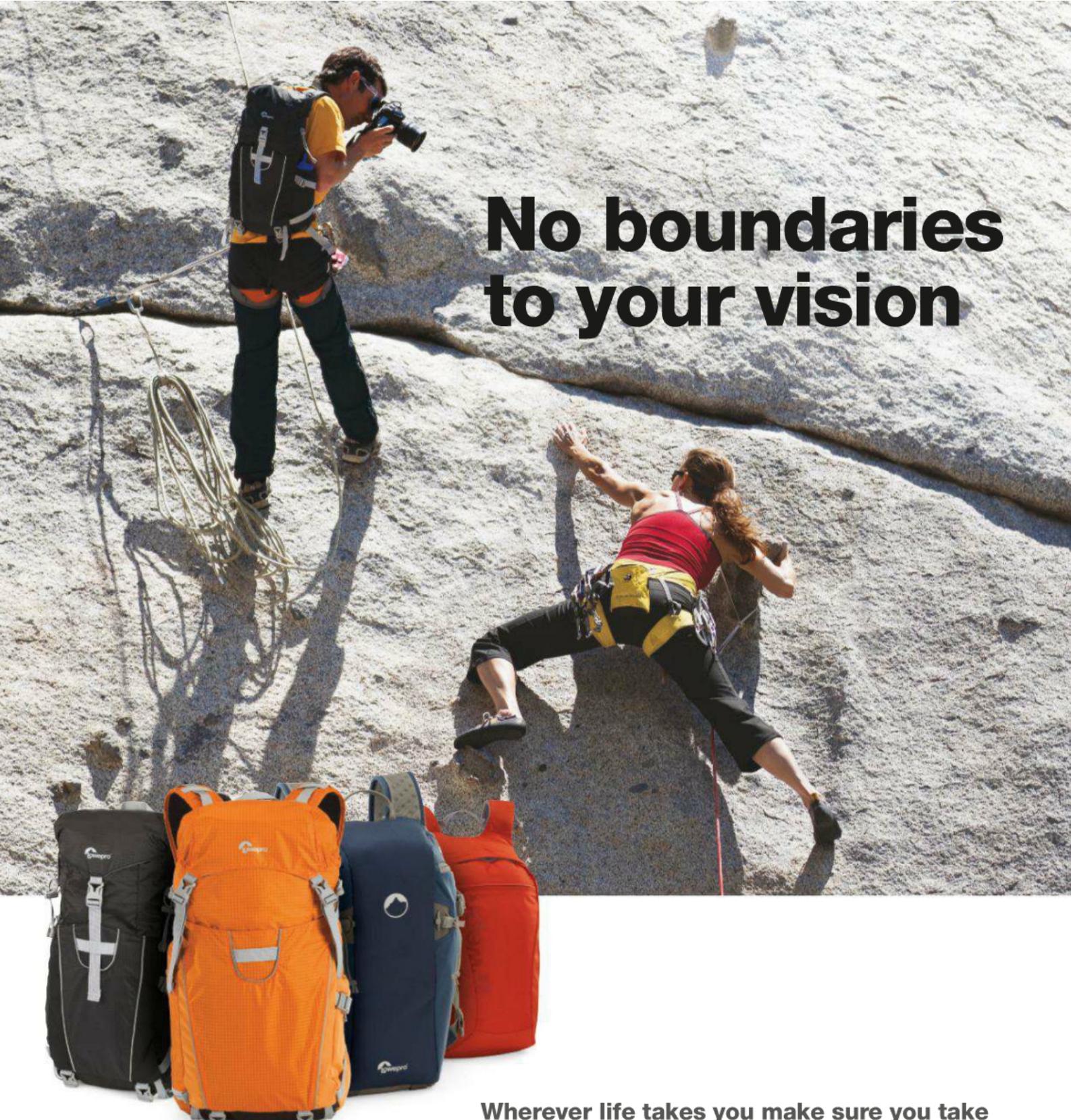
Eric lists his favourite photographic subjects as 'human interaction and expression'. However, this is only recent, as previously his family

would criticise him for taking too many pictures of buildings and objects devoid of people. A keen traveller, Eric has plans to visit Italy. He would also like to return to India, where the splendid images displayed here were taken. 'It's such a wonderful and colourful country,' he says.

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Appraisal

Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor Dan

Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor **Damien Demolder**



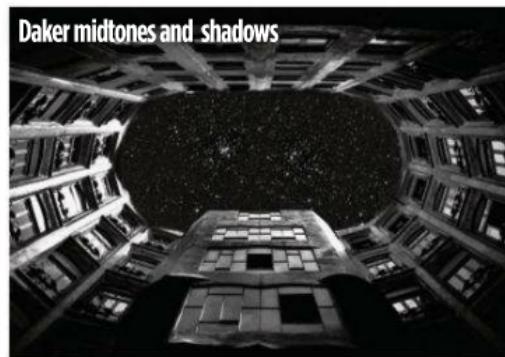
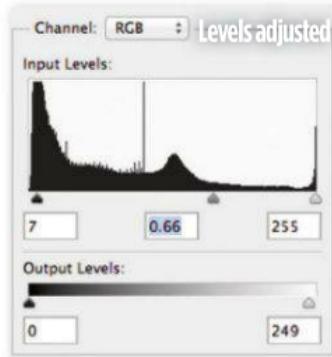
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Every reader* whose picture appears in *Appraisal* will win a Manfrotto Unica VII Messenger Bag worth £84.95. This bag combines style and functionality, ensuring that it is the perfect companion for carrying your camera gear, laptop and personal items. Gain quick access to your DSLR with lens attached, laptop and personal effects in the upper compartment by using the top opening. An additional compartment in the base of the bag also provides storage for selected Manfrotto Compact Photo Tripods.

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Csilla Szucs

Casa Milá

Fujifilm FinePix S8000fd, 4.7-84.2mm
1/750sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

I RECOGNISE this Gaudi building in Barcelona, Spain, as I have been there myself, and indeed while there I levelled my camera to my eye to take almost the same shot as Csilla has sent in here. In fact, there were hundreds of people shooting that same view. I actually didn't take the picture because I realised that even in colour, and on a day with a nice blue sky, the eye would be drawn away from the building and straight into that great oval space. There's nothing wrong with that in itself, but it rather wastes the location, as we can take a picture of the sky from anywhere.

Here, with Csilla's very bright and white sky, the attention-drawing effect is even stronger than ever, and the architecture has absolutely no chance of competing against the troposphere.

To demonstrate what I mean, I've cheekily replaced Csilla's bright sky with a dark and



starry night sky. Without that bright oval in the middle of the frame we can now sit back and enjoy the shapes of the building a little more without having our eyes pulled away all the time. With the night sky in place the building is actually a little too bright itself, so I used Levels to darken both shadows and midtones, and so create a much more moderate and realistic level of contrast. While I was at it, I thought I might as well complete the night-time atmosphere with a

mild blue colour layer placed over the building – but not the sky. This little bit of fantasy is supposed to suggest the coolness of the moon's light.

Of course, I'm not saying that Csilla should have shot this at night, but I wanted to demonstrate that when there is a large bright object in the frame it is very difficult for the viewer to drag his or her gaze anywhere else. I just got a little carried away, that's all!

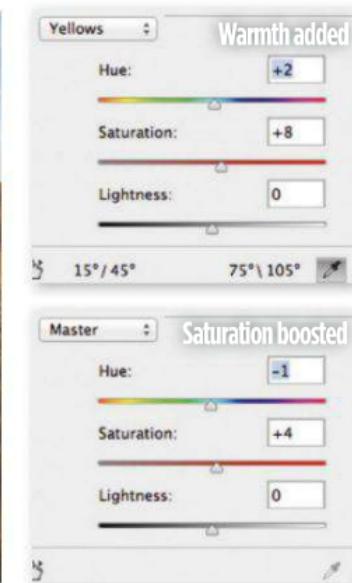


Kaplan Pirgon Footprints in the Huacachina Desert, Peru

Canon PowerShot SD1400 IS, 5-20mm, 1/400sec at f/2.8, ISO 80

UNDOUBTEDLY, the best time to shoot sand dunes is as the sun is low in the sky – morning or evening. In the morning, you can expect cooler light and paler sky, while the evening brings much more saturated colours. Either way, it's the low angle and the long raking light that picks out the miniature, and not so miniature, undulations in the sand, and which delivers texture, shape and form – and footprints!

This is a really lovely shot, and is good enough to win my picture of the week



PICTURE
OF THE
WEEK

'I added warmth to the yellows and increased their dominance'

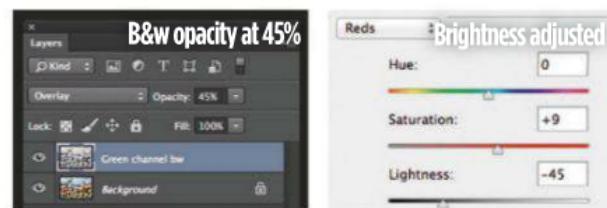
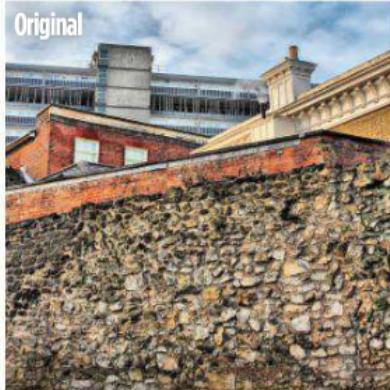
Darrel Neaves City centre buildings, Southampton

Canon EOS 550D, 18-55mm, 1/250sec at f/11

I ADMIT I'm not a big fan of high dynamic range (HDR) pictures – especially when the first thing you notice isn't the subject but the technique. HDR does have a place in photography, when it fractionally extends the dynamic range of a digital image so it more closely resembles the range of tones that can be captured on colour negative film. Beyond that, it is the end in itself rather than a method of improving our ability to recreate reality.

Here Darrel's picture relies too much on the HDR effect, leaving the subject as a secondary consideration. He says he took the shot because he liked the fact that the buildings were of different ages, but actually the first thing we see, beyond the HDR, is that great stone wall blocking our view.

To start with, I cropped the image to make the wall much less dominant and to create a more balanced composition. Next, I wanted to inject some of the contrast that has been lost, so I copied a black & white version of the scene created from the green channel and then pasted it over the original, blending the layer to the Overlay mode and dropping the opacity to 45%. Getting contrast back in



'I adjusted the brightness of the red channel to dampen it down'



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SIX OF THE BEST

AP Testbench

Twice a month we test of six of the best **accessories** on the market. Here we take a look at sling straps

Sling straps

Single shoulder-sling straps help to keep a camera close to hand and bring it quickly to the eye. **Jon Stapley** tests six of the best

Custom SLR Camera Strap and C-Loop

Street price £25 (strap), £35 (C-Loop), £50 (both)

www.customslr.com

Custom SLR has designed its camera strap with a split shoulder pad for maximum comfort. The result is a lightweight strap that adapts well to the shoulder. It's certainly comfortable even with heavier kit, the strap distributing weight evenly across the shoulder. The swivelling buckles that connect the strap to the pad increase flexibility, although they do make the strap slightly more prone to becoming twisted.

Also available is the C-Loop strap mount, a clip-on attachment that fixes the strap to the camera via the tripod screw. The mount is fully rotational, and this allows it to work well with the strap to maximise the ease of bringing the camera up into a shooting position quickly.

Amateur
Photographer
★★★★★



BEST
IN THE
GROUP



Hüfa: The Strap Street price £30 www.johnsons-photopia.co.uk

The Hüfa strap comes with a clip-on lens-cap holder included. The holder is a great product, and slotting a cap into it while shooting quickly becomes

second nature. The strap itself attaches securely through the camera's eyelets, and the inside is coated with durable PVC. The movable cushioned pad provides

some welcome extra support, although its rigid edges make it slightly uncomfortable, especially when craning the neck back to shoot upwards.

Amateur
Photographer
★★★★★



Joby UltraFit Sling Strap

Street price £40

www.daymen.co.uk

The Joby UltraFit Sling Strap's SpeedCinch system allows the user to bring the camera tight to the body quickly and securely for transportation, minimising the chances of damage by swinging or bumping. Tightening ('cinching in') the strap is carried out by pulling the camera and the chest-level ring in opposite directions. A clip then locks it, and unlocking it again allows the camera to glide up the strap into shooting position. Both operations are very smooth and easy to accomplish. Cinching in the strap practically eliminates unwanted swinging with lightweight kit, even when moving quickly. With a heavier camera and lens, though, there is more movement during transportation, with the weight of the kit more noticeable. However, this is still an excellent choice for users of lightweight kit.

Amateur
Photographer



FORTHCOMING TESTS

In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX300

Sony's top-end bridge camera, the 20.4-million-pixel HX300, has an f/2.8-6.3 lens with a whopping 50x optical zoom for a 24-1,200mm (35mm equivalent) focal range.

AP 16 March

Nikon D7100

Read our first thoughts about Nikon's new flagship DX-format DSLR, the 24.1-million-pixel D7100, with 51-point AF and no optical low-pass filter in a magnesium-alloy weather-sealed body.

AP 16 March

Fujifilm X100S

The X100S, Fujifilm's successor to the X100, has a higher-resolution 16.3-million-pixel X-Trans sensor and the same 23mm f/2 lens.

AP 23 March



Peak Design Leash

Retail price \$35 (£22)

www.peakdesignltd.com

The Peak Design Leash is the slimmest and lightest strap on test here, and is designed as an alternative to bulky traditional camera straps. It is made of smooth, seatbelt-style webbing that slides easily over the shoulder. It is also adjustable, working equally well around the neck, over the shoulder or tied to a belt loop. The strap attaches to the camera via secure plastic mounts, called 'Anchors', that loop into the camera eyelets. The lack of any padding means that owners of heavy pro kit may find a more heavyweight, cushioned strap to be the better option. However, for owners of enthusiast-level kit, or those looking to cut down on the bulk of their camera paraphernalia, this strap is ideal.

Amateur
Photographer



Op/Tech Pro Loop Strap

Street price £18

www.intro2020.co.uk

Op/Tech claims the Pro Loop strap will make your camera feel 50% lighter. We can't really say we found this to be the case in the test, but the strap did fit well and was comfortable. The strap loops through the camera's eyelets to form a slip knot that holds the strap in place, and this feels secure

without getting in the way of shooting. It is worth noting that if your camera has narrow eyelets you may find the loop system difficult to fit into place, as the webbing is quite thick. The strap is fairly short, even when fully extended, and it is a little awkward to move the camera into a shooting position quickly while wearing it over the shoulder. It works better as a reliable neck strap.

Amateur
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Six of the best portable hard drives are put through their paces in our two-page test.

AP 23 March

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Sizes available: 25 to 105mm

Circular Polarising Filters

SRB's circular polarising filters remove unwanted reflection from surfaces such as glass and water

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52mm	£16.00
55mm	£16.00
58mm	£16.00
62mm	£16.50
67mm	£17.00
72mm	£18.00
77mm	£20.00
82mm	£25.00
86mm	£32.50

Sizes available: 25 to 86mm

Skylight Filters

SRB's Skylight filters are used for lens protection

46mm	£11.50
49mm	£13.50
52mm	£14.95
55mm	£14.95
58mm	£16.95
62mm	£18.95
67mm	£20.95
72mm	£22.50
77mm	£25.95
82mm	£28.95
86mm	£35.50

Sizes available: 27 to 86mm

Infra Red Filters

SRB's Infra Red Filters block visible light and transmit infrared

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52mm	£19.95
55mm	£20.95
58mm	£20.95
62mm	£21.95
67mm	£22.95
72mm	£24.95
77mm	£29.95
82mm	£39.95
86mm	£49.95

Sizes available: 28 to 105mm

ND Filters

Full ND, Hard ND and Soft ND are available in:
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SRB's Neutral Density Filters reduces light and offers a full ND cover over your lens

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Sizes available: 27 to 82mm

Variable ND Fader

By rotating the outer filter you can alter the amount of light that passes through the filter, from 2 stop to 8 stop

Scored 4 stars in 'Amateur Photographer' magazine

5 stars in 'Amateur Photography' magazine

</div



Fast telephoto zoom lenses

The fast, full-frame 70-200mm f/2.8 telephoto zoom is a very popular lens. **Tim Coleman** tests five of the best proprietary and third-party versions

A FAVOURITE of photojournalists and wedding, portrait and event photographers, the 70-200mm f/2.8 telephoto zoom lens has a reputation for good control over curvilinear distortion, as its available focal lengths are typically easier to correct. Further appeal comes from the constant, fast f/2.8 aperture throughout the entire focal range. The five lenses on test here, from Canon, Nikon, Sigma, Sony and Tamron, also come equipped with, or have access to, optical stabilisation, which makes handheld use possible even in low light and at telephoto settings.

While these lenses are all designed for use on a full-frame camera, those using the APS-C format will be able to enjoy a 105-300mm focal range (or 112-320mm when

used with Canon APS-C-sized sensors). This extension makes this kind of lens ideal for more distant subjects, such as wildlife and sports. Add a 1.4x or 2x teleconverter (when the lens is used with a full-frame camera), and the focal range becomes 98-280mm and 140-400mm respectively. Many of the AF points in Canon and Nikon autofocus systems operate down to f/5.6, which means the operational AF speed on a 70-200mm f/2.8 lens with 2x converter should not be affected. Compared to Nikon's 200-400mm lens (street price around £4,950), this 70-200mm f/2.8 lens and teleconverter combination is much less costly.

With Tamron having launched a new version of its 70-200mm f/2.8, there are now two up-to-date, third-party versions of

this lens, and both are more affordable than the proprietary models.

The size and weight of each lens in this test provide a good balance when mounted on a professional or enthusiast-level DSLR, but not entry-level models. Even with enthusiast-level cameras, it is best to add a battery grip. Carrying all five lenses for this test (plus three professional DSLR bodies) made for a very heavy kit bag – indeed, one lens alone weighs around 1,500g. These are not the sorts of lenses to take on a day trip, but are best suited to specific jobs where the right support will be available to bear their weight. That said, with weight comes quality.

These lenses are reported by existing users to be virtually as sharp as many fixed-focal-length lenses, which is impressive given their zoom range. They have been used in various situations to get a feel for their handling, speed of focusing and quality of out-of-focus areas. Images taken with each lens, of both technical and real-life subjects, have then been scrutinised for sharpness and distortions.

CANON EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM



ANNOUNCED in January 2010, the Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM is a direct replacement for the EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS USM from 2001. Today, the difference in price between the two lenses is considerable. On the surface, the lenses appear virtually identical, but considerable work has been put into the innards, with new lens construction and AF motors.

Sporting Canon's off-white metal barrel, the newer lens has an excellent weather-

sealed build. Like the Nikon lens, the lens mount has a rubber ring to prevent moisture and dust entering.

Focus and zoom rings have a tactile, ridged rubber surface. Along with the Sigma lens (right), the Canon zoom ring has the most narrow turn from its 70mm to 200mm position, of approximately 60°. This is handy for quickly snapping between each end of the focal range, but makes more precise adjustments harder to achieve. The focus ring is very deep at around 45mm, and is therefore easily located even with one's eye to the viewfinder.

Four switches on the side of the lens adjust the AF and stabilisation modes. As



Taken at f/5.6, the out-of-focus lights show slight polygonal edges rather than being completely round

with the Nikon and Sony lenses, these switches vary in size to make it easier to tell them apart without a visual check. Switches include a focus limiter to 2.5m or the full range down to the minimum 1.2m (which, along with the Sony lens, leads the group), AF/MF, stabiliser on/off and the two stabiliser modes: one for static subjects and the other designed to counteract panning movement.

The petal lens hood measures 95mm deep, is lined with felt to reduce reflections and has a lock to prevent the hood from being knocked off accidentally. Its ends are flat, which means the lens can be stood upright when the hood is attached. As with the Sony model (below right), the sturdy collar can only be removed when the lens is not mounted to a camera.

Handheld testing going through the shutter speeds at the 70mm, 135mm and 200mm focal lengths shows that the 4-stop Image Stabilizer is consistently effective for up to 4EV. For example, eight out of ten shots were sharp when taken at 200mm and 1/15sec, which is impressive stuff!

The complex lens construction comprises 23 elements in 19 groups, five of which are ED elements and one is fluorite. This is the only lens with eight diaphragm blades, but a round aperture is still created and the out-of-focus areas are pleasant, regardless of which aperture is used.

Canon's Ultrasonic Motor (USM) provides quiet and reliable AF. The Canon and Nikon lenses top the group for speed.

NIKKOR AF-S 70-200mm f/2.8G ED VR II



NIKON'S first version of the 70-200mm f/2.8 lens was announced in 2003, with its successor arriving in July 2009.

Immediately it is clear that this lens is built to a high standard. Its barrel is made from magnesium alloy with the same dappled finish as the company's professional DSLR bodies. A rubber ring around the lens mount is an indication that the lens is weather-sealed to prevent dust and moisture entering the rear of the lens

when it is mounted on a camera.

This is the largest and heaviest lens in the group, but any differences in size and weight are negligible. Like all the lenses here, zooming and focusing are achieved internally, so the 209mm length of the lens remains unchanged during operation, and will not suck in dust while zooming, as is the case with some less expensive zooms.

Each lens has a ring to control focusing and one to control zooming. The Nikon model has a third ring at the front, which serves as a tactile grip but has no other function. The grip is handy for holding the lens at the front, but it is possible to confuse it temporarily with the focus ring. Each ring has a ridged rubber finish that is easy to



The Nikon lens has pleasant out-of-focus areas, even at f/5.6

grip, wet or dry. The zoom and focus rings turn smoothly, and offer a satisfying resistance that aids precise control. It is possible, in one motion, to rotate the ring from 70mm to 200mm, while focusing from the minimum 1.4m to infinity requires at least two turns.

There are four switches located on the side of the barrel, including a focus limiter (to 5m), on/off control for the 4-stop Vibration Reduction, 'normal'/active' stabilisation modes and manual/auto focus (with manual focus override).

Unlike all the other lenses, the tripod collar is built into the lens. Its standout feature is that the mount on the 'collar' is detachable, while all the other lenses require the collar to be removed entirely. The supplied petal-shaped lens hood is around 70mm long and handily features a lock that prevents accidental removal. The hood's ends are curved rather than flat so, rather impractically when mounted on the lens, it cannot be placed upright without tipping over.

The refreshed optical construction comprises 21 elements in 16 groups, with seven ED elements. Nine diaphragm blades create a round aperture.

Nikon's Silent Wave Motor is near-silent in operation and very speedy, although this is dependent on the camera and system being used. Simply put, with this lens mounted on a D300S or D4 and with the 'right' AF mode selected, expect the responsive AF to achieve a sharp shot.

SIGMA 70-200mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM



SIGMA has rightly established a reputation for building excellent-quality lenses that cost much less than proprietary versions. The company's 70-200mm lens is by far the least costly in this group, at around £900. Announced in September 2010, the lens is available in Canon EF, Nikon F, Sony Alpha, Pentax K and Sigma mounts, and for this test the Nikon version was used.

At 1,430g, the Sigma lens is the lightest in the group, but is still quite a weight to

carry around. It is a long lens at 197mm, but it does not rotate or extend during zooming. The zoom ring rotates clockwise from 200mm to 70mm, which matches the operation of the Canon lens, but is the opposite direction to the other three versions. Changing from 70mm to 200mm can be made in a single turn. However, the rotation of the zoom ring could do with a little more resistance, as it turns all too easily.

Unsurprisingly, given its lower price point, the overall feel of the lens is good without being class-leading. The barrel's high-quality plastic has a smooth finish unlike any DSLR, and the lens does not feature weather-sealing like the Nikon and Canon versions.



Like the Canon lens, the bokeh of the Sigma model shows slight polygonal edges rather than being completely round

The lens collar has a hinge, like the Tamron version (see page 48). However, the collars on these lenses do not feel as sturdy, with the hinge being an added potential point of weakness under heavy use. Supplied with the lens is a large hood measuring 107mm. Again like the Tamron lens, the hood's interior is ridged to reduce reflections.

A simple two-switch set-up on the side of the lens is for AF/MF and stabilisation. The latter has three options: off, single-axis panning and dual-axis stabilisation.

The lens construction comprises 22 elements in 17 groups, two of which are 'F' low-dispersion (FLD) elements (similar to Canon's fluorite element), and three special low-dispersion (SLD) elements. The focus group of lens elements is at the rear of the lens, hence the front-end zoom ring.

Like most of the other lenses in the group, this Sigma model offers an Optical Stabiliser that allows the use of shutter speeds up to a claimed 4-stops slower than a non-stabilised equivalent. It is, in fact, the first telephoto zoom lens from Sigma to feature stabilisation. Around eight out of ten shots were sharp when taken at 200mm and 1/30sec, which equates to around a 3EV stabilisation.

The lens uses Sigma's Hyper Sonic Motor (HSM), which provides quiet AF (although some Pentax and Sony cameras do not support the HSM function). Autofocus speed when compared directly to the Nikon lens (below left) is not quite as responsive in all lighting conditions, but is quick nonetheless.

SONY 70-200mm f/2.8 G



THE SONY 70-200mm is the oldest lens in this test, having been announced in June 2006. More than six years on, it still commands a high price that almost equals the most expensive models in this group.

In the hand, Sony's lens feels like a solid bit of kit, with a durable metal barrel in the company's distinctive professional Alpha off-white colour. It is not officially weather-sealed, however, and it lacks the rubber ring on its lens mount. In practice, this may never

prove a problem, but is something worth considering for anyone likely to take the lens into extreme conditions.

Both the focus and focal-length rings are wide and easy to locate with eye to viewfinder. They are smooth to rotate and easy to grip, even in wet conditions, thanks to the ridged rubber surface. At least three turns of the focus ring are required to travel from 1.2m to infinity, while the focal range ring needs a 90° turn to zoom from 70mm to 200mm. At 90° intervals around the front of the lens are three AF-stop buttons, so no matter the orientation of the lens, one of these buttons is close to hand.

This is the only lens in the group that does not have optical stabilisation – but it does not need to, because Sony provides its stabilisation in-camera instead. So given



Like the Nikon lens, the bokeh in this scene taken with the Sony lens is nicely rounded

a lack of stabilisation and weather-sealing, £1,600 seems a little steep.

Three switches control autofocus and include AF/MF, a focus limiter to the minimum 3m or full, and a direct manual focus (DMF) corrector mode for standard or full-time control. Autofocus overrides control of the manual focus ring in standard, and vice versa in full time.

Supplied with the lens is a durable, 100mm-deep, petal-shaped lens hood. Its flat ends enable the lens to stand upright when it is attached. The inside is lined with felt to reduce light reflections reaching the lens, and a window opening on the underside provides access to any filters that may be in use. Like the Canon version, the supplied collar can only be removed when the lens is not mounted on a camera body.

By number alone, the lens construction is the least 'complex' in this test, consisting of 19 elements in 16 groups, four of which are ED elements.

Sony's Super Sonic wave Motor (SSM) provides near-silent autofocus. Of course, AF speed is affected by the camera system being used – the responsiveness of the Alpha 99 is different to that of the Canon EOS-1D X, for example. The AF of the Sony set-up is reliable and speedy, but not quite to the extent of the Tamron and Canon lenses when used on the EOS-1D X, or the Nikon lens used on the Nikon D4, although it is a match for the Sigma lens when mounted to a D4.

TAMRON SP 70-200mm f/2.8 DI VC USD



LAUNCHED just a few months ago, the Tamron 70-200mm lens is the newest model in the group. The initial asking price is lower than those of the proprietary lenses, as would be expected of a third-party model, and it could come down even further. However, at £1,400 it is still significantly more expensive than the Sigma lens. Currently, the Tamron zoom is available in Canon EF, Nikon F and Sony Alpha mounts, with the Canon version used for this test.

At 196.7mm long and weighing 1.47kg, this is one of the shortest and lightest lenses in the group, although, as already mentioned, any difference in size and weight between these bulky lenses is hard to notice. Its barrel is made of high-quality plastic, rather than the metal of the brand versions. So while it is well made, it may turn out to be less durable.

A key difference between the proprietary and third-party lenses is that the zoom ring on the third-party lenses is at the front, while the focus ring is closer to the rear. This set-up works well because both rings are in close proximity – the hand can comfortably remain in the same place and access both

rings, whereas the brand lenses require more of a stretch between them. Each ring on this Tamron lens is beautifully damped for a smooth rotation. Along with the Sony and Nikon zooms, the focal-length ring on the Tamron lens rotates anti-clockwise, from 200mm to 70mm. Canon owners using the Tamron lens will need to adjust to an opposite rotation.

Two switches on the side of the lens barrel represent a simple control over stabilisation and focusing. One switch changes between auto and manual focus, while the other turns Vibration Correction on and off. Unlike the brand lenses, the Tamron and Sigma models do not feature a focus-distance limiter switch, which is a useful control for reducing the range the lens must 'hunt' to find focus on its subject.

Tamron's Vibration Compensation (VC) offers up to 4 stops of usable shutter speeds when shooting handheld.

The complex lens construction consists of 23 elements in 17 groups, including four low-dispersion (LD) elements and one extra-low-dispersion (XLD) element to reduce distortions such as chromatic aberration.

Tamron's Ultrasonic Silent Drive (USD) AF motor performs quietly and speedily. In a direct comparison with the Canon lens, it is hard to see a difference in speed, although the Canon version just edges it. Nevertheless, this means the Tamron lens is even more responsive than the Sony model.



The out-of-focus candle lights in this image taken with the Tamron zoom have possibly the most rounded edges of all the lenses here

Facts & figures



CANON
EF 70-200mm
f/2.8L IS II USM



NIKOR
AF-S 70-200mm
f/2.8G ED VR II



SIGMA
70-200mm
f/2.8 EX DG
OS HSM



SONY
70-200mm
f/2.8 G



TAMRON
SP 70-200mm
f/2.8 DI VC USD

RRP	£2,399.99	£2,099.99	£1,539.99	£1,889.99	£1,599.99
Street price	Around £1,800	Around £1,600	Around £900	Around £1,600	Around £1,400
Filter diameter	77mm	77mm	77mm	77mm	77mm
Lens elements	23	21	22	19	23
Groups	19	16	17	16	17
Diaphragm blades	8	9	9	9	9
Aperture	f/2.8-32	f/2.8-22	f/2.8-22	f/2.8-32	f/2.8-32
Minimum focus	1.2m	1.4m	1.4m	1.2m	1.3m
Length	199mm	209mm	197mm	196.5mm	196.7mm
Diameter	88.8mm	87mm	86.4mm	87mm	85.8mm
Weight	1,490g	1,540g	1,430g	1,340g (without tripod collar)	1,470g
Lens mount	Canon EF	Nikon F FX	Canon EF, Nikon F, Pentax, Sigma, Sony Alpha	Sony Alpha	Canon EF, Nikon F, Sony Alpha

Canon, Woodhatch, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8BF. 01737 220 000. www.canon.co.uk

Nikon, 380 Richmond Road, Kingston, Surrey KT2 5PR. 0330 123 0932. www.europe-nikon.com/en_GB

Sigma, 13 Little Mundells, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1EW. 01707 329 999. www.sigma-imaging.co.uk

Sony, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW. 01932 816 000. www.sony.co.uk

Tamron, Intro 2020 Ltd, Priors Way, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 2HP. 01628 674 411. www.intro2020.co.uk

OPTICAL QUALITY



IT MAY well be true that curvilinear distortion is less noticeable in real-world images than lab images, but good control of this is still desirable in a lens because it is flattering for portraits and less distracting in uniform patterns such as brickwork, which would otherwise be warped. None of the lenses here suffers badly from curvilinear distortion, but differences can be seen between them when viewing the results from our lab – as seen in the bowing of lines in our graphs (below).

Generally, each lens shows minor barrel distortion at 70mm, and by the mid 135mm setting it has shifted to pincushion distortion, which is again almost negligible. Pincushion becomes more pronounced at the 200mm setting, but is not a concern. A direct comparison shows that the Tamron and Nikon lenses have the best control over barrel distortion at 70mm, while the Sony, Tamron and Canon lenses are least affected by pincushion distortion at 200mm. None of the lenses is distorted beyond approximately 0.6% at any focal length.

Each lens has a complex construction, containing elements



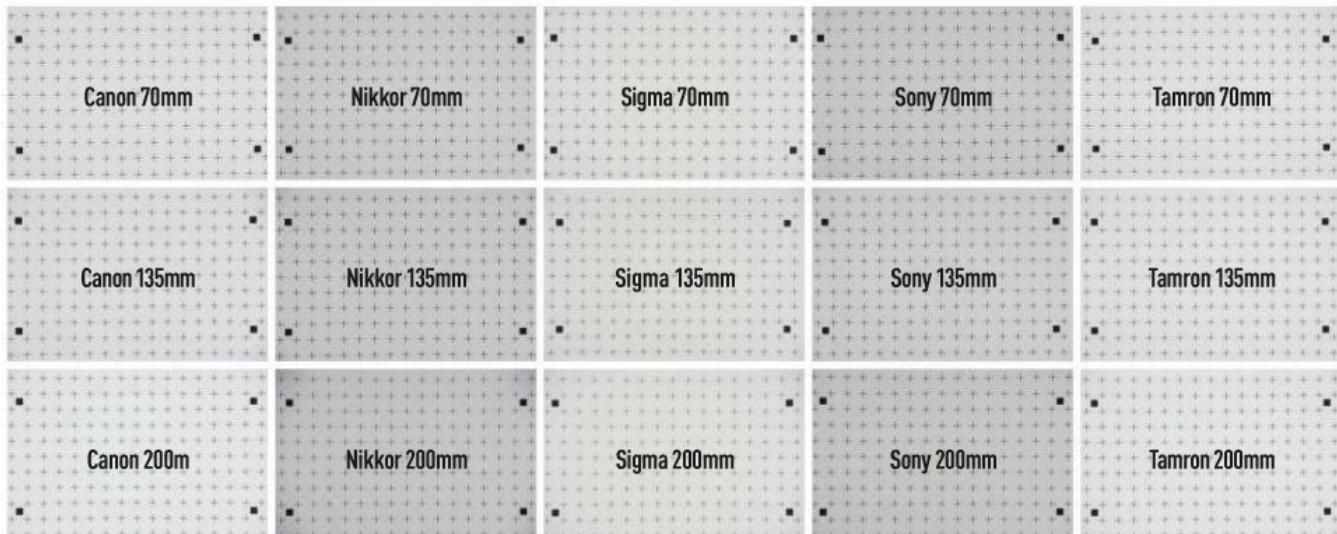
Chromatic aberration is, on the whole, well controlled in each lens and certainly something that can be dealt with post-capture. In this scene, taken at 70mm and f/2.8, the Tamron lens shows the best control

Canon f/2.8	Nikkor f/2.8	Sigma f/2.8	Sony f/2.8	Tamron f/2.8
Canon f/4	Nikkor f/4	Sigma f/4	Sony f/4	Tamron f/4
Canon f/5.6	Nikkor f/5.6	Sigma f/5.6	Sony f/5.6	Tamron f/5.6

Vignetting is evident in all five lenses at f/2.8, reduced by the f/4 setting and all but gone with the camera set to f/5.6 aperture or smaller

(be it ED, SLD or fluorite) that reduce distortions such as chromatic aberration. In the centre of the frame at any focal length it is difficult to find chromatic aberration in any lens, although in the bike picture (left) there are traces in each lens. It appears more pronounced in the Canon and Nikon lenses, but this is in part due to the slightly greater contrast and sharp edges than, say, the Sigma lens. The Tamron lens controls the distortion particularly well. At 135mm, this distortion is under control. In short, chromatic aberration is another type of distortion that is well controlled by all the lenses and is certainly something that can be dealt with quickly post-capture.

Finally, vignetting. A slight surprise is that the Sigma lens has just as good control over vignetting than the Canon lens when used at 70mm and f/2.8. The Tamron lens appears the most affected, while the Sony and Nikon versions show better control. Used in the APS-C format, vignetting is of no concern at any setting, because only the unaffected central portion of the frame is used in an image.



The bowing of lines in these charts indicates curvilinear distortion. All five lenses control this distortion very well, and the most extreme it gets is at 200mm, where pincushion distortion is more pronounced. Even then, one will struggle to see the effect in most 'real-world' images



SHARPNESS

IT IS not possible to make direct comparisons between the Nikon, Sony and Canon lenses because a different camera system has been used for each to record our resolution charts. However, as close a comparison as possible has been used, with the 24-million-pixel Nikon D600 being used for the Sigma and Nikon lenses, the 24-million-pixel Alpha 99 for the Sony lens and the 22.3-million-pixel Canon EOS 5D Mark III for the Canon and Tamron lenses.

Our resolution charts indicate centre sharpness for each of the lenses at the optimum f/5.6 and f/11 settings, and it is difficult to

note any differences between them at all. The brand lenses show slightly better contrast, with the Sigma lens a tad softer, but all five models are able to resolve up to 30 marker on our charts. This is close to the performance of the Sigma 105mm f/2.8 macro lens that we use to record the charts in our camera tests, so these are impressive results all round.

The f/2.8 and f/22 apertures provide a greater test for each lens, being the 'softest' settings. Again, resolved detail is similar, but there are more noticeable differences. For example, the Sigma lens is the softest at f/2.8, showing less contrast and a sort of 'glow'

around object edges. The Tamron lens is able to match the brand lenses, which are impressively crisp given that f/2.8 is the fastest aperture available.

A big test of the quality of a lens is at the edges of the frame, with poor-quality lenses usually having soft and distorted detail. Having recorded the same scenes with all five lenses, each model puts in an impressive performance. There is a slight difference in edge sharpness, which is consistent with the differences in centre sharpness – that is, the Sigma lens is a little softer. Put simply, each lens is able to carry its solid centre performance to its edges.





All five portraits have been recorded using the 135mm and f/8 settings on each lens, to achieve the best and sharpest quality. At this setting, any differences in sharpness between the lenses is so minimal that it is difficult to tell the lenses apart. The impressive centre sharpness is taken to the edges, too, with detail in the shirt cuff being crisp right to the edge of the frame. When pushed to the wide f/2.8 setting, the differences are more obvious – the Sigma lens has less contrast and is slightly softer than all the other lenses.

RESOLUTION

Canon	Nikon	Sigma	Sony	Tamron
135mm f/2.8 28	135mm f/2.8 29	135mm f/2.8 28	135mm f/2.8 28	135mm f/2.8 28
f/5.6 30	f/5.6 30	f/5.6 29	f/5.6 30	f/5.6 30
f/11 30	f/11 29	f/11 30	f/11 29	f/11 28
f/22 28	f/22 27	f/22 28	f/22 26	f/22 27

The images for the resolution chart have been recorded as mentioned in the beginning of the *Sharpness* section (see below left). Differences between 70mm, 135mm and 200mm settings are minimal, so only the sharpest 135mm setting has been included. Each lens reaches the same marker, although the Sigma lens has less contrast than the others.

Verdict

ON PAPER, all the lenses are remarkably similar: they are heavy, each weighing in the region of 1,500g; they are bulky, with lengths of approximately 190mm; they offer 4-stop stabilisation (in-camera with Sony versions); and they have a similar number of lens groups and elements. To a degree, then, as I set out on this test, I was expecting to be splitting hairs. However, over the course of some use, each lens has displayed some noteworthy differences.

Each lens is constructed to a high standard but, being made of plastic, the third-party versions have less of a 'workhorse' feel to them. The hinge on the lens collars appears as a potential point of weakness. The Canon and Nikon lenses are the only ones that are officially weather-sealed, which could make a difference to those shooting in extreme conditions. The zoom and focus rings of the Sigma lens turn all too easily, while the rest are beautifully damped, but I prefer the layout of the control rings in the third-party versions.

Autofocusing is an area where the Nikon and Canon lenses have the edge, with AF motors that snap into focus very quickly. Well done to the

Tamron lens, too, as it puts in a fine performance. All this said, only the critical photographers covering high-speed action and events will be affected by these largely minute fractions.

As for image quality, each lens put in an excellent performance. Again, differences are mostly subtle: the Sigma is edged for clarity and contrast at all settings, especially at its f/2.8 aperture where it is softer than the rest. Impressively, the third-party Tamron lens is able to match the sharpness of each brand lenses and its control over distortions such as chromatic aberration is equally good. None of the lenses is affected by distortions to a point that cannot easily be rectified post-capture using basic raw-editing software.

Overall, the proprietary lenses have the edge over the Sigma optic in virtually every key area, but they come at a premium. The Tamron lens competes ably, but is priced virtually the same as the brand models and has a build quality that is not up to the same standard. In short, each lens can proudly boast a premium performance, but the most critical, demanding photographers are best served by spending big.

CANON

Amateur
Photographer

NIKON

Amateur
Photographer

SIGMA

Amateur
Photographer

SONY

Amateur
Photographer

TAMRON

Amateur
Photographer

Improve your photography



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'The quality of teaching and support that I received was not only motivating, but also extremely detailed and thorough. This enabled me to begin to find who I am as a photographer and without doubt my skills improved considerably.' Gill Golding



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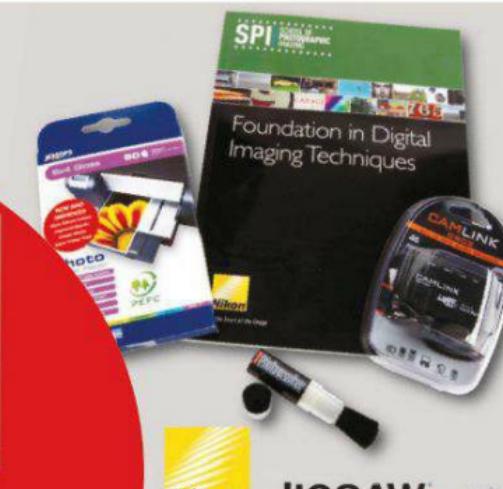
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A full-page photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved top, a black and white checkered skirt, and a reflective, metallic arm guard on her right arm. She is posed dramatically with her hands raised, palms facing outwards, against a dark blue background.

AP explains...

Lighting gels

One of the cheapest lighting accessories can also be the most useful. **Richard Sibley** explains how to get the most from a simple set of lighting gels

APART from a softbox, the most useful accessories that I have for my small lighting kit are different-coloured lighting gels. However, mention lighting gels and many photographers will think of images seen in photography books from the 1970s and '80s, where portraits were lit with blue- or red-coloured lights – and sometimes even both. This garish style looks very dated, and has probably deterred quite a few photographers from ever buying a set of lighting gels. Yet these gels are useful for a variety of different purposes, and are one of the cheapest accessories available.

There are basically three ways that lighting gels can be used: for colour

correction; to create a special effect; or to simply illuminate an area or subject with a particular colour. The key to using lighting gels well is to use them subtly and in moderation. Unless you are using a lighting gel for colour correction, there are few times when the coloured light should be the dominant illumination in an image. Over the next few pages, I will explain exactly what lighting gels are, and how and when to use them.

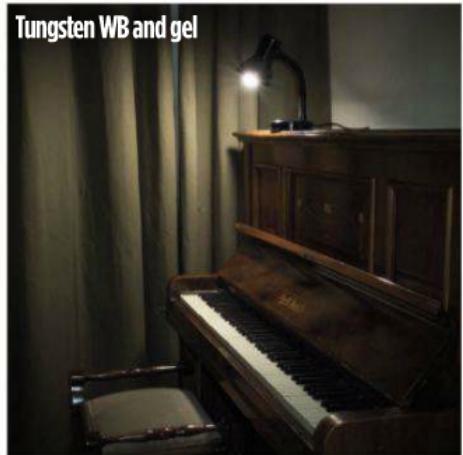
WHAT IS A LIGHTING GEL?

Lighting gels are coloured transparent sheets used to alter the colour of a light source. They are called gels because

for years gelatine was used in their manufacture. However, as the gels have to withstand the extremely high temperatures created by continuous lights used in photographic, theatre and television productions, they are now manufactured from various heat-resistant plastics.

As the size of lighting gel required depends entirely on the type of light with which it will be used, gels usually come in rolls or sheets that are then cut to the correct size. This is especially true in photography, where often only a very small amount of gel is required for use with a hotshoe flashgun. For this reason, many manufacturers offer small kits for photographers with a number of different-coloured gel swatches.

Despite being manufactured from materials designed to withstand very high temperatures, lighting gels do wear out over time. The colour can begin to fade and the material can become quite brittle and just flake away.



COLOUR-CORRECTION GELS

SOME of the most useful types of lighting gels are those that alter the colour temperature of a light so it replicates another light source. While these are also possibly the least exciting, they can make a crucial difference to images lit with multiple sources of light.

For example, using fill-in flash in a tungsten-lit room means there will be two light sources illuminating the scene, each with a different colour temperature. The tungsten light will be an orange colour, while the flash will be very blue in comparison. Setting the camera's white balance to tungsten will add blue to the image to neutralise the orange colour of the tungsten lights. However, in doing so, the added blue will also exaggerate the blue light from the flash, which can be very unflattering when using fill-in flash for portraits, producing a cold, pale-looking complexion.

However, by using an orange colour-correction filter over the flash, the light it emits will be orange and will match the colour of the tungsten light in the

COLOUR-CORRECTION CHART

Ambient light	Flash gel	Number	Camera WB
Tungsten	Full CT Orange	204	Tungsten
Outdoor street lamps	Urban Sodium	652	Custom WB
500W studio tungsten	Quarter CT Orange	206	Tungsten
Fluorescent	Half Plus Green	245	Fluorescent

room. Setting the camera's white balance to tungsten will then neutralise the orange light from both the tungsten lights and the flashgun, creating a perfectly neutral image.

Another example might be when taking images outside at night. Streetlights produce a very orange/amber-coloured light. If you are taking a portrait of someone using flash, with the camera's white balance set to flash, then the subject will look neutral, but the background will be a deep amber colour. Instead,

Top: Lit using both tungsten light and a fill-in flash, there is a big difference in white balance across the scene. Using a tungsten gel over the flash means it matches the colour of the tungsten lamp, leaving no colour cast when the tungsten white balance is used



Left: Some flash gel kits have Velcro fixings so they can be easily attached to your flashgun

using a deep amber filter and setting the camera's white balance to tungsten, or an even stronger custom setting, will make both the subject and the background neutral.

Blue colour-correction gels work in a similar manner. A good example is when people wish to mix continuous tungsten lights and flash in the studio. Instead of putting the orange gel over the flash, blue gels can be used with the tungsten lights to help match their light to the colour of the flash output.

Fluorescent lighting is a little trickier to compensate for, as the exact colour of the light can vary as the bulbs or tubes heat up, and depending on which gas is used inside. As a general rule, most fluorescent lights emit a green hue. A green colour gel over a flash will therefore match it to this light, enabling the fluorescent white balance setting to be used on the camera for an even colour temperature across the image.

Colour-correction gels are available in different strengths, usually measured in 1/4, 1/2 and full, to match the colour temperature of different strengths of light. To get an exact colour match, it may be necessary to combine different filters. For example, combine 1/4 and 1/2 gels to make a 3/4 gel, for those times when a full gel is just a little too much. Similarly, some lights may just have a slight hint of another colour, such as certain types of street lamp. In these instances, try using a full orange gel combined with another slightly pink gel to recreate the hue of the light. There are hundreds of different colours and strengths of gel available, and manufacturers will often have sample swatches that can be purchased to try out. The table above contains some of the most common types of colour-correction gel and the product numbers from the most popular manufacturers.

MEASURING COLOUR TEMPERATURE

It is usually quite easy to find out the colour temperature of lights that are used for photography. Most manufacturers will list the colour temperature of flashguns, studio flash heads and continuous lights in each product's specification – after all, it is in their interests to make this information

available. When it comes to balancing different types of light, it is therefore quite easy to work out roughly which gels to use, but for absolute precision the exact colour temperatures are necessary.

Lee Filters has a handy calculator on its website that allows users to select the colour temperature of the light source to be filtered, and then the colour temperature of the light that is to be matched. It then displays the colour filter gel, or different combinations of gels, that can be used to match the light sources. The gel calculator is free to use and is available at www.leefilters.com/lighting/mired-shift-calculator.html.

With traditional tungsten light bulbs now being replaced by energy-efficient ones, it is a little more difficult to know the colour temperature of the newer kind. Older types of energy-efficient bulbs have the same colour temperature as a standard fluorescent lighting tube, while others are designed to produce a cool daylight colour. However, most current household energy-efficient bulbs try to replicate the colour of a tungsten bulb.

When shooting with these bulbs, it is important to allow them to warm up fully to reach their peak operating temperature, as the colour of the light will change as this takes place. The white balance of these bulbs is sometimes featured as a Kelvin value on the box, or included in the instructions. Failing that, the specification is often available from the manufacturer's website.

It is also possible to find out the exact colour temperature of a light using a digital camera. Using only the light source to be measured, hold a grey card under the light and use the camera's custom white balance feature to take a colour reading from the light. Usually, the exact Kelvin value of the light source will be set and should be shown when looking at the image information on the camera screen. If the custom white balance value is not apparent, open the raw file in raw-editing software and it can be seen there. Once this value is known, the Lee Filters calculator can be used to calculate the filters needed to match a flash to this light.

WHERE TO GET THE GELS

Lee Filters
www.leefilters.com.
Manufacturer of lighting gels

Lumiquest
www.snapperstuff.com. Manufacturer of a number of kits to enable the use of filters on flashguns. Distributed in the UK by Snapper Stuff

Honi
www.flaghead.co.uk. Honi makes the lighting gel kit pictured on page 54. Distributed in the UK by Flaghead Photographic

Rogue
www.daymen.co.uk. Manufacturer of the Universal Flash Gels Kit. Distributed in the UK by Daymen

Rosco Lighting Gels
www.rosco.com/uk. Manufacturer of lighting gels

Silverprint
www.silverprint.co.uk. Has a good selection of Lee Filters in both rolls and sheets

TOP TIPS

- Use the custom white balance to find out the exact colour temperature of a light source
- A grey background can be easily coloured using a filter gel
- Remember to think about how the colours of the gel will work with other colours in the image. Try using complementary colours together.
- Keeping a basic selection of colour-correction gels with your flash is extremely useful
- Gels can reduce the flash output, so make sure that this is factored into the exposure
- Certain coloured gels can be used to replicate certain types of light, such as a sunset or moonlight



USING COLOUR GELS FOR EFFECTS

WITH such a huge number of coloured gels available, many are used for special effects. For example, a Deep Golden Amber 135 gel may be used to replicate a vivid sunset. By placing the flash at a low angle to light the subject in a room, it can look like the light from a sunset pouring in through a window. At night-time, or on an overcast day, the flash can be placed outside a window, with the window frame creating strong shadows across the subject.

This effect can even be recreated without actually needing a window. Use a large sheet

of black card and cut out a simple frame to give the impression of window light falling onto the subject. Alternatively, try cutting strips out of the card to create a Venetian blind effect. Both techniques will make it appear as though the subject is sitting next to a window at sunset.

However, it isn't just sunsets that can be recreated using lighting gels. A Sky Blue 068 gel gives the appearance of moonlight. Use the same technique as for the sunset effect, except place the gelled flash higher and angled down at the subject.



LIGHTING A BACKGROUND

ONE OF the best uses for a lighting gel is to change the colour of a background. The opening image of this article (page 53) was taken using a flash with a blue lighting gel and pointed at a plain-black cloth background. The touch of colour adds more depth to the image than if it had been simply shot against black.

The colour was chosen because it matched the subject's clothing. When using coloured gels in an image, it is important to think about the colours already present in the scene. For subtlety, use matching or complementary colours to light a background, although colours can be made to clash if the image requires it. The beauty of using coloured gels is that simply switching gels can completely change how an image looks, so try experimenting with a few different colours.

To light a background with a gelled flash, try to make sure that the background is neutral. Although black and white backgrounds can be transformed into a different colour, they may still leave dark black areas, or bright white hotspots when white paper is used. For this reason, a grey background is often the best choice. With just a few differently coloured filter gels, it is possible to turn a grey background into many different coloured hues without going to the expense of buying separate coloured backgrounds. Remember that gels can be



This is the set-up for the images below, with the flash behind the orchid pointing at a grey background. You can see the wide range of colours that are possible

mixed together, so a combination of red and blue gels will turn the light purple. This ability to combine different-coloured filters is why it is useful to have a basic set of primary and secondary-coloured gels, as well as a set of colour-correction filters.

Mixing gels isn't the only way to alter the

colour of a filter. When lighting a background, adjust the brightness of the colour by altering the power of the flash. Lowering the flash power will make the colour darker, while increasing it will make it brighter. With just one grey background, you can see how it is possible to create a range of colours.

Altering the strength of the flash means that many different hues can be created from each single-coloured gel





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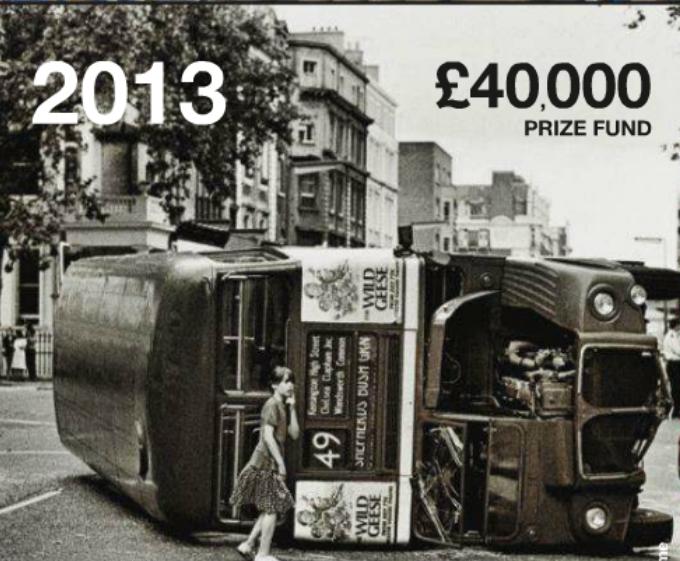
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The easiest way to get the best exposure for your snow photos is to use exposure compensation

EXPOSING FOR SNOW

Q When I took some pictures in the snow a few months ago, I had problems getting the right exposure as my shots always seemed to be underexposed. I tried using manual settings, the meter reading and P mode, but the pictures were still underexposed. Do you think there is a problem with my Fujifilm FinePix S3 Pro's metering system? **Keith Chapman**

A Although I haven't seen your specific S3 Pro, I'm sure this isn't a fault with the metering system. It sounds as though it's down to the way in which in-camera light meters are designed to work. The light meter built into your camera assumes that every scene it reads will average out as a midtone. That is, if the scene were in black and white (all light meters are colour blind), and you balanced out the lightest and darkest tones, and all the tones in between, you'd be left with a mid-grey. It doesn't matter whether you use centreweighted, spot pattern, matrix or evaluative metering, the system behind these patterns aims to produce an exposure based on the assumption that the metered area balances out as a midtone.

In most cases, this will produce a 'good' exposure with your S3 Pro's 10-segment matrix-metering pattern or when you use the centre/spot options correctly, but the system is not infallible. If you aim your camera at a particularly bright subject, such

as snow, the camera will attempt to produce an 'average' midtone result, which in this instance will mean your shots appear underexposed. This is what I think is happening here.

There are ways round this, ranging from using a handheld light meter to take an incident light reading (which is unaffected by the subject's brightness/reflectivity), to taking an exposure reading from an 18% grey card.

However, the easiest option is to use your S3 Pro's exposure-compensation feature to increase the brightness of the exposure. You will need to dial in positive (+) exposure, and depending on the amount of snow in your scene, dial in 1-2 stops. To check that you haven't overcooked the exposure, look at the playback histogram after you've taken a shot. If the histogram is piled up against the right edge of the graph, you've 'clipped' the highlights and lost detail, so reduce the amount of compensation and shoot again. With practice, you should soon have your whites white again. **Chris Gatcum**



ASK...

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FAILED SUB-BOARD

Q I have had my Leica C-Lux 2 for more than four years and have been advised that the sub-board has failed. Do you know if this is a particular problem with the Leica, as my Panasonic Lumix DMC-FX7 is eight years old and still going strong. **Martin Smith**

A I have not been able to unearth anything suggesting that this is a problem endemic to the C-Lux 2, so I think you have to accept that it's just one of those things and the price we must occasionally pay for getting such complex, high-tech products at increasingly low prices. It's certainly annoying, but being a little more philosophical about it, your Leica has given you more than four years of memories so it's not all bad. **Chris Gatcum**

GN FORMULA

Q I have a Yongnuo YN460-II, which is a manual flashgun with a GN (guide number) of 38m @ ISO 100. Is there a formula or calculation for working out the guide number at other ISO settings, such as ISO 400 and ISO 800? **Patrick Wilson**

A To determine the guide number for a flash at different ISO settings, start at ISO 100 and multiply the GN by 1.4 for each ISO stop increase. Therefore, your YN460's guide number would increase from 38m @ ISO 100 to 53.2m @ ISO 200 (38x1.4), 74.48m @

FROM THE AP FORUM

Low-key portraits

BAHoltPhotography asks How do I shoot low-key portraits? When people use flash, the background in their images is always pitch black, but when I have tried this it has always resulted in the background being revealed by the flashgun. How do I avoid including the background when taking photographs with flash?

AP GLOSSARY

INVERSE SQUARE LAW

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the inverse square law is defined as 'a law by which the intensity of an effect, such as gravitational force, illumination, etc, changes in inverse proportion to the square of the distance from the source'. It is therefore fundamental to light (illumination), and by extension photography, but it is something that is often glossed over.

At its most basic, the inverse square law states that the intensity (brightness) of a point light source decreases (falls off) the further it is from the source. While not rocket science, it's not quite so simple either, as the inverse square law quantifies this fall-off: the illumination level changes in inverse proportion to the square of the distance from the source.

Let's break this phrase down by working backwards. First, let's say the 'distance from the source' is 2 metres. The square of the distance is 4 (2×2) and the inverse of the square is 1/4. This tells us that the intensity of the light reaching a subject at 2m is 1/4 the

intensity of the light reaching it at 1m (the square of 1 being 1, and the inverse being 1/1). The simplest way of working it out is to multiply the distance by itself and use that as the lower number in a fraction. A 5m distance would indicate 1/25 power ($5 \times 5 = 25 = 1/25$).

Although not something needed that often, when you're using artificial off-camera lighting it is worth bearing in mind, especially when you want to position your lights and subject. For example, the brightness difference between a subject at 2m and a subject at 1m is significant – it's a 75% drop from 1m to 2m, which is equivalent to 1 stop. However, the difference between a subject at an 8m distance (1/64 power) and a subject at 9m (1/81 power) is much less: the difference is 1.6% vs 1.2% power, which in terms of exposure is negligible. The latter would therefore be a better option if you wanted to photograph a group of people and have uniform lighting as the former could result in significant differences in brightness.

ISO 400 (53.2x1.4) and at ISO 800 it would be 104.27m. Note that the increase is 1.4x the previous GN. This is based on the inverse square law (see *Glossary*, above).

ISO	GN multiplication
50	x0.7
100	x1.0
200	x1.4
400	x2.0
800	x2.8
1600	x4.0
3200	x5.6

PeteRob replies You need studio lighting. To keep a background completely unlit, the subject would have to be carefully lit using several light sources to get a natural effect. I think you would also need a fairly large studio to ensure a good separation of subject from background to avoid overspill and you would also need a non-reflective background.

NosamLuap replies You're spot-on regarding the separation between the subject and background, but it doesn't need studio lights, as off-camera hotshoe flashes or continuous lights can do the job, too. You may need to flag the light to prevent it from spilling into the background, so bits of card can be handy here.

If you're just learning about lighting, I

recommend reading <http://strobist.blogspot.co.uk/2006/03/lighting-101.html>.

PhilW replies In addition to the previous good advice, think about the principles of what you are trying to achieve – to light the subject but not the background. Then work from that, based on the space available to you.

One option is to have a great distance between the subject and background, so any stray light falling on the background is reduced by distance so it's not a feature.

Another option is to direct the light so that it's not pointing at the background, or is flagged off. Place something between the flash and the background, such as a large sheet of card, a sheet of plywood or a curtain.

In next week's AP

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FIRST LOOK



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Professor
Newman
explains...

Transmissive or reflective?

Professor Bob Newman looks at the means by which we view images, whether as prints, slides or on LCD screens

MY FATHER always insisted on using slide film. His reasons were sound from a technical point of view. Slide film offered higher image quality than prints. This was due to the means of viewing, that they depended on transmitted light rather than reflected light, which in turn meant that they could reproduce a wider range of tones from bright to dark than prints could. My father therefore became one of the surprisingly large band of photographers whose photography was more about the taking of photographs than the display of them. The setting up of the screen and projector was enough of an inconvenience that viewings were a rare event, and for the most part the slides remained unviewed, stacked in their wooden boxes. While digital photography has probably significantly increased the number of unviewed photos that are taken, at least they take up less space than they did.

Even though my father's photographs were seldom seen, he still continued taking them. For him, photography was about the taking. This reflects the motivation of many photographers, and in turn leads to the concentration of magazines, such as AP, on the capture stage of photography, and thus a general focus on cameras. Here we

redress the balance a little and look at the devices used for viewing photographs, their characteristics and limitations. The story about my father wasn't completely irrelevant, either, as one of the major differentiators between output devices and media is whether they are reflective or transmissive, and that in turn affects the range of tones they can produce.

TRANSMISSION AND REFLECTION

Historically, images have mostly been reproduced on a reflective medium, be it paper, canvas, vellum or stucco. The tonal range that can be reproduced depends on the difference between the pure white of the paper and the deepest black of the ink. This in turn depends on the ability to reflect light off the white surface and the complementary ability of the ink to absorb it. The best black ink reflects 2–3% of the light, while the whitest white paper reflects just under 100%. This means the maximum bright to dark range, or 'contrast ratio' of a print, is something less than 50:1.

A transmissive medium can do much better than this. Opaque ink blocks virtually 100% of the light, while clear glass or other transparent material can pass very close to 100%. This was the basis of the colour slide's superior contrast ratio. Modern technology can do better still, for displays that generate their own light, if they can be truly turned off, the contrast ratio can be infinite.

These two basic ways of displaying an image, by reflection or transmission, have

carried through to the digital world. While the slide projector is relatively rare, the data projector still exists, but prints are still with us, and added to this is the use of display screens, on TVs, computers, tablets, smartphones and digital picture frames – all of which are essentially transmissive media. However, they do have one major difference compared with old time slides. The other reason my father insisted on slides was because slide film was sharper than print film due to the thinner emulsion. I always wondered whether that additional sharpness survived the projector lens and the not-quite-flat projection screen, but I never raised the question. When it comes to digital display media, though, the situation is reversed, because – at least until recently – prints could display more resolution than any digital display.

PRINTS

To be precise, the digital output medium for a print is the print itself, but in this article we will discuss the device that produces the print – usually known, somewhat obviously, as a printer. The role of the printer is to deposit pigment or ink onto the paper in a pattern that produces the final image. There are two technologies used for photographic work. The first is a 'dye-sublimation printer'. In this, the paper is held against a sheet coated in dye. Generally, there will be three different dyes, corresponding to the reflective primary colours. The primary light colours in vision are red, green and blue. Together, these mix to give white light. Paper starts off white, so the job of the pigment or ink is to subtract red, green or blue (they are also called subtractive primaries). The subtractive primaries are cyan, which reflects only blue or green light, thereby subtracting red; magenta, which reflects red and blue, thus subtracting green; and yellow, which reflects red and green, subtracting blue. These are the more accurate versions of the painter's primary colours – blue, which is actually cyan; red, which is magenta; and yellow.

The dye-sublimation printer's head is equipped with an array of small heating elements. Heating the ink film causes dye to evaporate and be absorbed in the paper. By controlling the heat, the amount of dye transferred can be controlled, allowing dye-sublimation printers to produce a wide range of tones. The disadvantage is expense, as the dye film can be used only once and most of the dye is never used. This disadvantage has led to the dominance of the second technology – the inkjet printer.

In an inkjet printer, minute drops of ink are projected at the paper to build up the image. This is done using a print head, which is the most ubiquitous example of a cutting-edge manufacturing technique known as

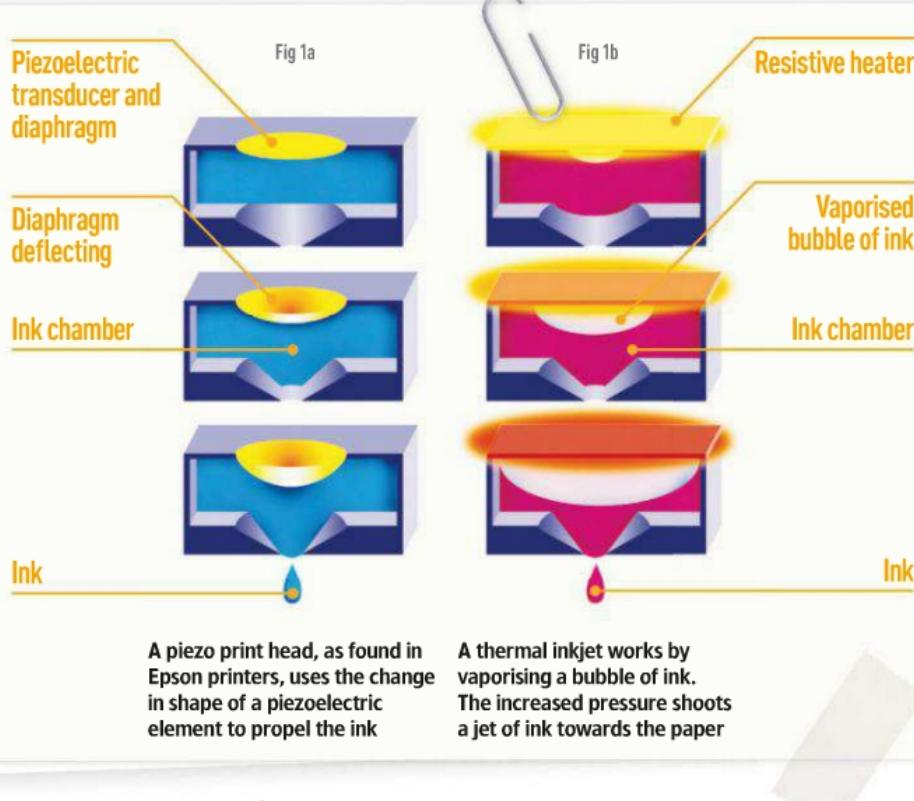
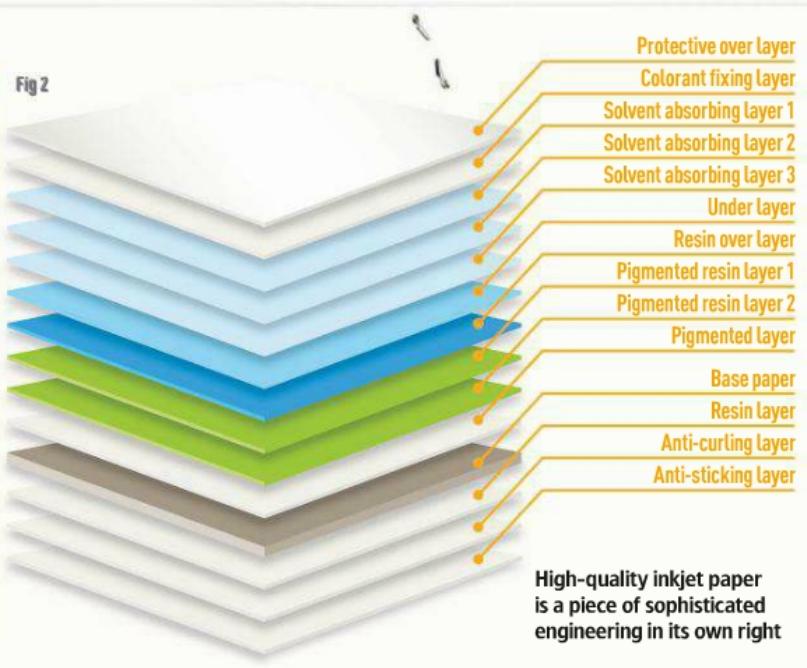


Fig 2



'The modern liquid-crystal display integrates the electronics to provide the control signal into the display panel itself using thin-field transistors (TFTs)'

microelectromechanical systems, or MEMS.

Two kinds of print-nozzle structure are shown in figure 1. In figure 1b, the drop is fired by vaporising a bubble of ink behind it using an electric heater. This is the technique used in Canon and most other printers. Epson printers use a different technique, shown in figure 1a, in which a small piezoelectric (which means that it flexes when an electric signal is applied) element fires the ink. This nozzle structure is repeated tens or hundreds of times in the print head, which is scanned across the paper, firing drops of magenta, cyan and yellow ink as it goes.

Unlike the dye-sublimation printer, the inkjet printer can only fire a drop or not, producing a spot of a fixed size and tone

on the paper. To allow this to build up a full-toned image, three techniques are employed. The first is to make the printer with a higher resolution than is really needed. The limits of human perception at normal viewing distances dictate that 300 pixels per inch should be enough to avoid visible pixelation at usual viewing distances. Inkjet printers generally provide much more than this, allowing patterns of dots to be built up to provide a fuller range of colours.

Then there is the technique known as 'dithering', where the dots are placed in a random pattern to form a mean density. The randomisation of the pattern makes it less visually apparent than would be a fixed pattern.

Finally, modern high-quality inkjet printers

make use of additional inks. There will invariably be a black, and sometimes shades of grey, as well as desaturated versions of the primary colours. By using these, a larger colour gamut can be provided without distracting dot patterns.

The final factor is the quality of the ink, which might be dye or pigments. Pigments are very finely ground solids suspended in a liquid carrier and can provide much longer lifetimes for the resulting print without fading.

The final, and often overlooked essential for good quality from an inkjet printer is paper that receives the ink in an optimum fashion. Inkjet paper is itself a highly engineered commodity, as can be seen from figure 2.

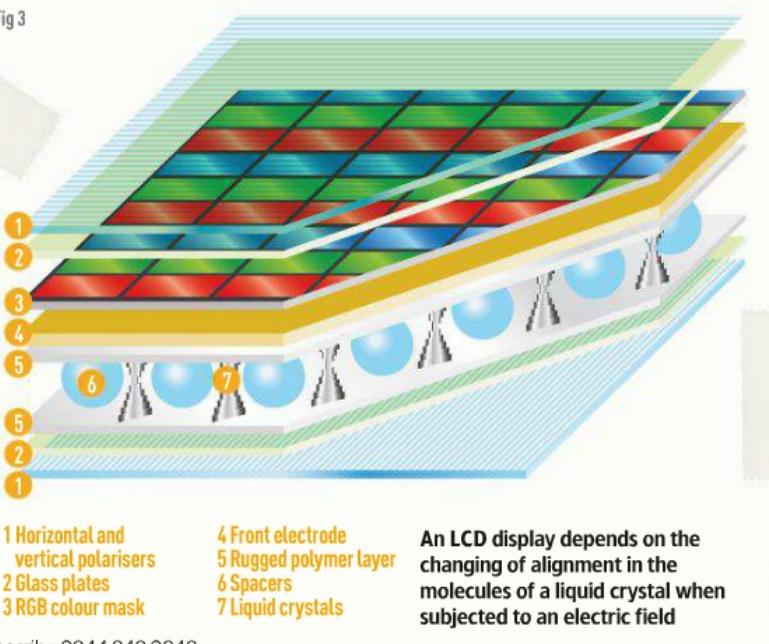
TRANSMISSIVE DISPLAYS

Invariably these days, transmissive displays are based on liquid-crystal technology. A liquid crystal is a chemical with long, thin molecules that change alignment under an electrical charge. The alignment changes the optical properties, particularly the polarisation of the liquid. By sandwiching a cell of liquid crystal between glass on which transparent electrodes are printed (see figure 3), and putting in crossed-polarising films, a cell can be constructed whose transmissivity depends on an electrical signal.

The modern liquid-crystal display integrates the electronics to provide the control signal into the display panel itself using thin field transistors, known as TFTs. As a transmissive display, this is capable of producing a significantly higher contrast ratio than is a paper medium, of up to 1000:1 or more. The downside of the LCD is its lower resolution, but this is also being addressed in the form of such technologies as the Apple Retina displays, with pixel densities approaching that of print. Once there, the LCD will be the modern equivalent to the slide in terms of superiority of display.

Due to space limitations here, LCD technology will be covered in more detail at a later date. **AP**

Fig 3



BOB NEWMAN originally trained as a physicist, and is now an engineer and computer scientist with a PhD in real-time systems design. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and has been responsible for innovative developments in graphics workstations, avionics, marine instruments and radar systems. Two of his products have won

innovation awards. Bob has led research projects in design methodology, automotive technology and, more recently, sensing systems. He is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. Bob is a camera nut and has been a keen amateur photographer from the age of seven. He is delighted to be given the opportunity to apply his professional expertise to his hobby.

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Black or Red

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4.0 fps
1080p movie mode

D3200

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24.1 megapixels
5.0 fps
1080p movie mode

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5.5 fps
Full Frame CMOS Sensor

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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D600 Body

★★★★★ 'Superb replacement for D700'
Alphafan - N.W. England



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Nikon
D800

24.3 megapixels
5.5 fps
Full Frame CMOS Sensor



D800

From £1929

D800 Body
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£1929
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Nikon
D4

16.2 megapixels
11.0 fps
Full Frame CMOS Sensor



D4 Body

£4249

D4 Body

£4249

CUSTOMER REVIEW: D800 Body

★★★★★ 'An excellent full-frame camera'
Photographer JH – North Bucks

D7000 Body RRP £899.99 £642
D7000 + 18-105mm VR RRP £1099.99 £789

Nikon Capture NX2

System requirements: Windows 7, Vista, XP Professional, Home Edition or Mac OS X 10.4.11, 10.5.4. See web for more details £132.95
Nikon Capture NX2 Upgrade £84.99

SONY

NEX-6 Black

NEW!

16.1 megapixels
10.0 fps



NEW! NEX-6 Body £619

NEW! NEX-6 + 16-50mm PZ £729
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NEX-7 + 18-55mm Black £939

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A77



A77 From £829

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NEW! A99 From £2199

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†T&Cs apply – See website for details

Panasonic

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NEW! G5 Body £459

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GFS + 14-42mm PZ £459
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NEW! GH3 Body Black £1199
NEW! GH3 + 14-140mm £1579
NEW! GH3 + 12-35mm £2299
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OLYMPUS

OM-D E-M5 Silver or Black

16.1 megapixels
9.0 fps
1080p movie mode



OM-D E-M5 From £979

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NEW! E-PL5 From £579

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NEW! 6D

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CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS M + 18-55mm IS II

★★★★★ 'Good thing in a small package' Goughsclub - Reading



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CUSTOMER REVIEW: 600D + 18-55mm IS II

★★★★★ 'The enthusiasts Digital SLR Camera' Camerabug - Norfolk

NEW! 6D

From £1599

Canon EOS 650D

Canon EOS 60D



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CUSTOMER REVIEW: 650D + 18-55mm IS II

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★★★★★ 'Highly recommended, better than expected' Memo - Worcestershire

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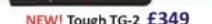
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445	£259
Small	£109
Large	£139
Pro Original	£169

5 Series: Khaki/Tan, Black/Tan, Black/Black, Fibre-Nyte/Leather: Khaki/Tan, Sage/Tan, Black/Black.

335	£249
225	£249.95
445	£259
Small	£109
Large	£139
Pro Original	£169

Hadley: Canvas/Leather: Khaki/Tan, Black/Tan, Black/Black, Fibre-Nyte/Leather: Khaki/Tan, Sage/Tan, Black/Black.

335	£249
225	£249.95
445	£259
Small	£109
Large	£139
Pro Original	£169

Tripods & Heads

Joby Gorillapods from only £19 – See our website for details!

Manfrotto
Imagine More

055XPROB
• 178.5cm Max Height
• 10cm Min Height

190XPROL
• 164cm Max Height
• 8.5cm Min Height

055 Series:
055KDB £102
055XB £113
055XPROB £119
055KV £139
055CXPRO3 £249
055CXPRO4 £249

NEW! 190XPROL £144
NEW! 190XPROL + 496RC2 £199
Compact Ball Head £199
NEW! 190XPROL + 804RC2 £259
3-Way Head £189

GIOTTO

Silk Road YTL8353
• 171cm Max Height
• 19cm Min Height

NEW! SILK ROAD - 3D Column:
YTL9353 Aluminium £114
YTL9383 Aluminium £124
YTL8353 Carbon Fibre £239
YTL8383 Carbon Fibre £259
YTL8384 Carbon Fibre £269

VGRN8225
• 135cm Max Height
• 23.1cm Min Height

Vitruvian Series:
VGRN8225 Tripod + MHS310-630 Ball Head £249
VGRN8265 Tripod + MHS501-652 Ball Head £309

GITZO
focus on forever

GT3542 LS
• 146.5cm Max Height
• 9.4cm Min Height

6X Systematic Series:
GT3542 LS £629
GT3542 XLS £699.95
GT4542 LS £699
GT5542 LS £814.95
GT5562 GTS £999.95

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NEW! iPad Retina Display – WiFi From £388

NEW! iPad Retina Display – WiFi + Cellular From £494

4th Generation model

Canon

PIXMA Pro 1

Mac Mini From £479

PIXMA Pro 100

PIXMA Pro 1 £389
PIXMA Pro 10 £648
PIXMA Pro 10 £519

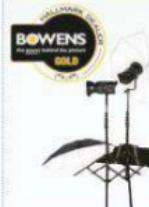
i1 Display Pro £158

ColorMunki Display £112

Adobe Lightroom 4 £99
Lightroom 4 Upgrade £59

Spyder4 Pro £99

Studio Lighting & Accessories



Gemini Series Kits:
Flash Heads, 2x Reflectors, 2x Umbrellas, 2x Light Stands, 2x Power Leads, Sync Lead and Kit Bag.
200/200 Twin Head £399
400/400 Twin Head £539

Pulsar Radio Trigger Twin Pack £239.99



NEW! BRX Series Kits:
BRX Heads, 2x Portabrite Softboxes, 2x ClipLock Stands, 1x Skyport Transmitter, 2x Mains Leads, Head Case and Stand Bag.
250/250 Twin Head £849
500/500 Twin Head £909
500/500 Twin Head £969



D-Lite 4Rx Softbox Kit £649
BRX Kit From £849

EzyBalance £18.99
Urban Collapsible £165

Over 2100 Studio Lighting products available to buy – See our website for details!

Gemini R Pulsar Tx Kits:
Flash Heads, 2x Stands, 1x 60x80cm Softbox, 1x 90cm Umbrella, 1x Wide Reflector, 1x Pulsar Tx Trigger and Card, 2x Mains Leads, Sync Cord and Cases.

500/500R Twin Head £949
500/500R + Travelpak £1360
500/500R 3 Head £1499

Pulsar Plug-In Trigger Card From £75.99

Gemini Pro Pulsar Tx Kits:
Flash Heads, 2x Stands, Silver/White Umbrella, Wide Angle Reflector, 60x80cm Softbox, 1x Pulsar Tx Trigger and Card, Leads, Cables, Modelling Lamps and Cases.

500Pro Twin Head £1189
500Pro + Travelpak £1649
500Pro Twin Head £1799
1000Pro Twin Head + Travelpak £2049

Style RX Series Kits:
Style RX Heads, 2x 16cm Reflectors, 2x ClipLock Stands, 2x Translucent/Silver Umbrella, 2x Carry Cases, Leads, Cables and User Guide.

200/200 Twin Head £589
400/400 Twin Head £649

D-Lite One RX Series Kits:
NEW! Umbrella Kit £375
NEW! Softbox Kit £425

Ranger Quadra RX Set A £1549

Back Light Stand £31.99

15° Snoot £74.99

75° Softlite £114.99

120° Reflector £46.99

Reflector Kit £124.99

60° Reflector £144.99

Softboxes From £154.99

90° Reflector £21.99

60° Reflector Kit £44.99

83cm Umbrella Set £26.99

Portable 66x66cm Softbox £109.99

Lightmeters

Sekonic L-308s Pro 478DR £139
DigiPro F £159.99

Paper

Colorrama From 1.35x11m £34.99
1.72x11m £43.99
2.72x11m £53.99

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For Next Working Day Delivery our charges are £4.99**.

Saturday deliveries are charged at a rate of £7.50**.

(**Deliveries of very heavy items, or to some European countries, N.I., remote areas of Scotland & C.I. Isles may be subject to extra charges.) E. & O.E. Prices subject to change. Goods subject to availability. Live Chat operates between 8am-7pm Mon-Fri and may not be available during peak periods. Wex Photographic is a trading name of Warehouse Express Limited. ©Warehouse Express 2013.

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<http://bit.ly/WexClearance>

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MEMORY

NEW LOWER PRICES

Sandisk

Sandisk Blue	C4: 5MB/s
16GB	£8.27 £3.99
4GB SMD's	£12.41 £3.99
8GB SMD's	£21.10 £4.99
16GB SMD's	£39.39 £7.99
Sandisk Ultra	C6: 30MB/s
4GB 30MB/s	£45.66 £4.99
8GB 30MB/s	£27.85 £6.99
16GB 30MB/s	£57.22 £10.99
Sandisk Extreme	C10: 30&45MB/s
4GB 30MB/s	£21.33 £7.99
8GB 30MB/s	£37.42 £8.99
16GB 45MB/s	£52.02 £14.99
32GB 45MB/s	£92.02 £28.99
Sandisk Ultra 30MB/s	30MB/s
4GB 30MB/s	£24.76 £13.99
8GB 30MB/s	£36.12 £19.99
16GB 30MB/s	£70.06 £34.99
Sandisk Extreme 60MB/s	60MB/s
8GB 60MB/s	£67.02 £29.99
16GB 60MB/s	£116.19 £49.99
32GB 60MB/s	£208.89 £89.99

Lexar

Compact Flash: 400X	£148.46 £29.99
8GB 60MB/s	£204.25 £54.99
16GB 60MB/s	£408.50 £99.99
Compact Flash: 600X	£477.38 £43.69
8GB 90MB/s	£271.30 £77.69
Compact Flash: 1000X	£671.30 £109.99
16GB 150MB/s	£1030.56 £199.99
32GB 150MB/s	£2061.12 £399.99
SDHC Class 10: 400X	£100.73 £14.99
8GB 60MB/s	£140.73 £14.99
16GB 60MB/s	£248.47 £22.99
SDHC Class 10: 600X	£100.73 £37.99
16GB 90MB/s	£229.79 £69.99

Transcend

Compact Flash	£59.99 £29.99
8GB 60MB/s	£90.99 £49.99
16GB 60MB/s	£181.98 £94.99
SD Cards	£8.99 £3.99
2GB	£19.99 £5.59
4GB Class 10	£28.99 £7.99
8GB Class 10	£49.99 £14.99
16GB Class 10	£99.99 £44.99
USB Pen Drives	£11.99 £4.19
4GB Transcend	£19.99 £5.99
8GB Transcend	£34.99 £11.99

BATTERIES & CHARGERS

Standard Rechargeables

High-power Ni-MH rechargeable AA and AAA batteries - all sold in packs of 4.	
AAA 1000mAh Duracell	£6.99
AA 24500mAh Duracell	£6.99
AA 2500mAh GP	£9.99
AA 2850mAh Ansmann	£13.99
AA 2900mAh Delkin	£14.99 £9.99

ReCyko+ Rechargeables

New technology, combining the benefits of Alkaline and Ni-MH rechargeable batteries. They come pre-charged, retain 90% of their charge after 6 months, and last 4 times as long as alkaline batteries!	
AAA 800mAh equivalent (4)	£5.99
AA 2050mAh equivalent (4)	£7.99

Ultimate Lithium

Energizer Ultimate Lithium: The longest lasting AA and AAA batteries in the world!	£6.99
AAA Ultimate Lithium (4)	£7.99 £5.99
AA Ultimate Lithium (4)	£7.99 £5.99

BATTERIES

Camera Batteries

A comprehensive range of rechargeable Li-ion batteries. Manufactured by respected independent battery manufacturers: Energizer and Blumax. All batteries come with a 2 year guarantee.

SB-L1H for Canon	£9.99
SB-L3 for Canon	£9.99
SB-4L for Canon	£9.99
SB-5L for Canon	£9.99
SB-6L for Canon	£9.99
SB-7L for Canon	£12.99
SB-8L for Canon	£9.99
SB-9L for Canon	£9.99
SB-10L for Canon	£12.99
BP-511 for Canon	£12.99
LP-E5 for Canon	£12.99
LP-E6 for Canon	£12.99
LP-E8 for Canon	£15.99
LP-E10 for Canon	£12.99
NP40 for Fuji	£9.99
NP45 for Fuji	£9.99
NP50 for Fuji	£9.99
NP95 for Fuji	£9.99
NP140 for Fuji	£12.99
NP150 for Fuji	£19.99
NP400 for Minolta	£12.99
EN-EL1 for Nikon	£9.99
EN-EL3A for Nikon	£9.99
EN-EL3E for Nikon	£15.99
EN-EL5 for Nikon	£9.99
EN-EL9 for Nikon	£12.99
EN-EL10 for Nikon	£9.99
EN-EL11 for Nikon	£9.99
EN-EL12 for Nikon	£9.99
EN-EL14 for Nikon	£24.99
EN-EL15 for Nikon	£29.99
EN-EL19 for Nikon	£12.99
EN-EL20 for Nikon	£14.99
L10B/12B for Olympus	£9.99
L40B/42B for Olympus	£9.99
L50B for Olympus	£9.99
BLM-1 for Olympus	£12.99
BLS-1 for Olympus	£12.99
CGA-S005 for Panasonic	£9.99
CGR-S006 for Panasonic	£9.99
CGA-S007 for Panasonic	£9.99
DMW-BCG10 for Panasonic	£19.99
DMW-BCJ13 for Panasonic	£19.99
DMW-BK7 for Panasonic	£19.99
DMW-BLB13 for Panasonic	£19.99
DMW-BLE9 for Panasonic	£14.99
DMW-BMB9 for Panasonic	£24.99
D-L150 for Pentax	£12.99
D-L190 for Pentax	£12.99
D-L109 for Pentax	£12.99
SLR for Pentax	£12.99
SLM-113D for Samsung	£9.99
SLM-1674 for Samsung	£12.99
BG-1 for Sony	£19.99
NP-FM500H for Sony	£19.99
NP-FH50 for Sony	£19.99
NP-FW50 for Sony	£24.99

Battery Grips

A range of professional battery grips from Hahnen. All can take two Li-ion batteries for double the battery power. AA battery compartment and vertical shutter release and infrared remote, depending on model.

For Canon 5DMkII:	£99.99
For Canon 5DmkIII:	£99.99
For Canon 7D:	£99.99
For Canon 30/40/50D:	£59.99
For Canon 60D:	£99.99
For Canon 450/500D:	£69.99
For Canon 550D:	£99.99
For Canon 600/650D:	£99.99
For Canon 1000D:	£69.99
For Nikon D80/D90:	£59.99
For Nikon D800/D800E:	£99.99
For Nikon D7000:	£99.99

Dedicated Charger

A dedicated Li-ion charger, able to charge most camera batteries. Mains cable, plus 12V car charger.

£14.99

Universal Charger

The NEW Hahnen UniPal charger is able to charge AA, AAA, Li-Ion batteries, camcorder batteries, iPods and more! Mains power cable, plus 12V car charger. Full details on our website.

£19.99

Coin Cells, etc

A comprehensive range of specialist batteries - see our website for full range.

CR123A Energizer Lithium (1)	£1.99
CR2 Energizer Lithium (1)	£3.99
CR25 Energizer Lithium (1)	£5.99
CRV3 Energizer Lithium (1)	£1.99
LR44 Energizer Alkaline (2)	£1.99
CR2025 , CR2032 etc	£1.99

£1.99

Full range of coin cells in stock

SQUARE FILTERS

KOOD

P-Type Filter System

The P-Type square/rectangular filter system consists of three parts:

- 1) An adapter ring that screws onto the front of your lens
- 2) A filter holder clips onto the ring
- 3) One or more P-Type (84mm wide) filters



KOOD square filters are manufactured in the UK, and are fully compatible with the Cokin P-Type filter system

P-Type Adapter Rings

49mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
52mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
55mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
58mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
62mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
67mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
72mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
77mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
82mm Adapter Ring	£4.99
87mm Adapter Ring	£4.99

P-Type Holders

Holder Standard	£5.99
Holder Wide Angle	£6.99
Hood Modular	£6.99

P-Type Filter Wallet

A smooth cushioned filter wallet, to protect and store up to 8 P-Type filters

£9.99

P-Type Six-Piece Neutral Density Filter Kit

£49.99
£43.99

Neutral Density filters are a multiple of uses - from increasing detail in landscapes and reducing over-exposed skies, to creating strong highlights through the use of ND filters. Here's a kit which includes all the popular ND filters, and everything you need to get started! The kit contains: 1x ND2 Filter, 1x ND2 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND4 Filter, 1x ND8 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND16 Filter, 1x ND32 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND64 Filter, 1x ND128 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND256 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND512 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND1024 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND2048 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND4096 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND8192 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND16384 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND32768 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND65536 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND131072 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND262144 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND524288 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND1048576 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND2097152 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND4194304 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND8388608 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND16777216 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND33554432 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND67108864 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND134217728 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND268435456 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND536870912 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND1073741824 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND2147483648 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND4294967296 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND8589934592 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND1717986912 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND3435973824 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND6871947648 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND13743895296 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND27487790592 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND54975581184 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND10995116320 Soft Graduated Filter, 1x ND21990232



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CAMERA BAGS



We will match or beat ANY UK Think Tank price!
Full Think Tank range in stock - below are just a few examples:

Retrospective 7	Airport Commuter	Airport International V2.0
NEW! £114	NEW! £149	£245

Billingham

We will match or beat ANY UK Billingham price!
Full Billingham range in stock - below are just a few examples:

Hadley Range	The 5 Series	The 07 Range
Hadley Small £126	Hadley Large £148	Hadley Pro £159
225 335	£247 £256	107 207
£279 £270	£247 £270	£315 307
£288		

Kata

Comprehensive Kata range in stock! Below are just a few examples:		
NEW!	NEW!	NEW!
Gearpack-60 £49	DR-465 £65	DR-466 £72
Gearpack-80 £59	DR-466 £72	3N1-25 £139
Gearpack-100 £69	DR-467 £79	3N1-35 £169

tamrac

Comprehensive Tamrac range in stock! Below are just a few examples:		
4X £89	6X £29	Accessories
5X £104	7X £39	Water Bottle £13
6X £119	8X £44	Lens Case 50 £12
7X £149	9X £49	Lens Case 100 £13
8X £169	10X £59	Lens Case 200 £14
		Flash Case £11
		Rain Cover £20

VANGUARD

Comprehensive Vanguard range in stock! Below are just a few examples:		
UP-Rise 28 £72	Outlawz 16Z £54	Backpack UP-Rise 45 £90
UP-Rise 33 £82	Outlawz 17Z £63	UP-Rise 46 £99
UP-Rise 38 £90		UP-Rise 48 £108

RAIN COVERS

OpTech Rainsleeve	Kata Elements Covers	Think Tank Hydophobia
Unique eyepiece opening and drawstring lens enclosure. Two versions, for DSLRs with or without a flashgun, 2 per pack.	Protect your camera against elements!	The ultimate protection from the weather!
Standard Flash £6	E690 Small £37	70-200 £109
Standard Flash £8	E702 Large £52	70-200 Flash £114
		300-600 £118

CAMERA STRAPS

BLACKRAPID

The world's fastest camera straps!

RS-4 Classic	£54.99
RS-5 Cargo	£64.99
RS-7 Curve	£59.99
RS-W11 Womens	£59.99
RS-SPORT	£59.99
RS-DR1 Double	£119.99
SnapR-35 Large	£44.99

OP TECH USA

The world's best-selling SLR camera straps!

Camera Straps	System Connectors
Wrist Strap £11.99	Adapt-Its (4) £4.99
Classic Strap £16.99	Extensions (2) £6.99
Super Classic £19.99	UniLoop (2) £6.99
Pro 3/8 Strap £17.99	ProLoop (2) £9.99
Pro Loop Strap £18.99	LensSupport (2) £9.99
Utility Sling Strap £29.99	Sling Adapter £10.99

E&OE. Prices may be subject to change, but hopefully not!

TRIPODS



Massive range of Manfrotto in stock!
Below are just a few examples:

190XPROB Tripod	055XPROB Tripod
Aluminium 3-section legs, aluminium canopy, Q90 horizontal tilting central column	Aluminium 3-section legs, aluminium canopy, Q90 horizontal tilting central column
Weight: 1.85kg	Weight: 2.40kg
Load: 5.0kg	Load: 7.0kg
Folded: 57cm	Folded: 65cm
Height: 146cm	Height: 178cm
£99.99	£109.99

190CXPRO3	190CXPRO4	055CXPRO3	055CXPRO4
Carbon Fibre 3-section legs, Q90 column	Carbon Fibre 4-section legs, Q90 column	Carbon Fibre 3-section legs, Q90 column	Carbon Fibre 4-section legs, Q90 column
Weight: 1.29kg	Weight: 1.34kg	Weight: 1.65kg	Weight: 1.70kg
Load: 5.0kg	Load: 5.0kg	Load: 8.0kg	Load: 8.0kg
Folded: 58cm	Folded: 50cm	Folded: 65cm	Folded: 54cm
Height: 146cm	Height: 146cm	Height: 175cm	Height: 170cm
£204.99	£212.99	£232.99	£246.99

MM294A3 Monopod	MM294A4 Monopod	679B Monopod
Aluminium 3-section	Aluminium 4-section	Aluminium 3-section
Weight: 0.50kg	Weight: 0.50kg	Weight: 0.60kg
Load: 5.0kg	Load: 5.0kg	Load: 10.0kg
Folded: 59cm	Folded: 49cm	Folded: 64cm
Height: 151cm	Height: 151cm	Height: 162cm
£29.99	£34.99	£35.99

234 Tilt Head	234RC Tilt Head	804 RC2 Pan / Tilt
Ideal for monopods	with RC2 quick release	with RC2 quick release
Weight: 0.27kg	Weight: 0.27kg	Weight: 0.79kg
Load: 2.5kg	Load: 2.5kg	Load: 4.0kg

496 RC2 Ball Head	498 RC2 Ball Head	410 Geared Head
with RC2 quick release	with RC2 quick release	with RC4 quick release
Weight: 0.46kg	Weight: 0.67kg	Weight: 1.22kg
Load: 6.0kg	Load: 8.0kg	Load: 5.0kg

PRO 253CT	PRO 283CT	NEW! Nivelio Tripods
Carbon Fibre 3-section legs, MACC column	Carbon Fibre 3-section legs, MACC column	A new range of lightweight, flexible, compact tripods with heads, that fold fast in a few seconds
Weight: 1.66kg	Weight: 1.70kg	thanks to the unique, inverting open canopy.
Load: 7.0kg	Load: 8.0kg	204BK H:101cm, W:0.6kg £53.99
Folded: 63cm	Folded: 64cm	214BK H:120cm, W:0.7kg £62.99
Height: 165cm	Height: 170cm	244BK H:145cm, W:1.1kg £98.99
£242.99	£296.99	245BK H:161cm, W:1.2kg £107.99

PH32 Pan / Tilt	SBH08 Ball Head	GH100 Pistol Grip
3-way fluid head, magnesium, 3 spirit levels, quick release plate.	Lightweight magnesium head, with head adjuster knobs, 2 spirit levels, quick release plate.	Multi-swing-tilting pistol grip head with spirit level, quick control and panoramic function.
Weight: 0.42kg	Weight: 0.39kg	Weight: 0.75kg
Load: 6.0kg	Load: 10.0kg	Load: 6.0kg

A284 Tripod	C2804 Monopod	Triad 30 Lite
Aluminium 4-section	Carbon Fibre 4-section	4 section magnesium alloy
Weight: 2.17kg	Weight: 0.59kg	tripod, legs extendable at 3 different angles, reversible centre column, built in spirit level. Supplied with BH50 alloy ball head, and carrying case.
Load: 8.0kg	Load: 4.0kg	Weight: 1.20kg
Folded: 56cm	Folded: 47cm	Max Load: 4.0kg
Height: 154cm	Height: 153cm	Folded: 61cm
£73.99	£59.99	Max Height: 142cm

C2504 Monopod	C3204 Monopod	Triad 40 Lite
Carbon Fibre 4-section	Carbon Fibre 4-section	4 section magnesium alloy
Weight: 0.59kg	Weight: 0.66kg	tripod, legs extendable at 3 different angles, reversible centre column, built in spirit level. Supplied with BH40 alloy ball head.
Load: 4.0kg	Load: 4.0kg	Weight: 1.58kg
Folded: 47cm	Folded: 47cm	Max Load: 5.0kg
Height: 153cm	Height: 153cm	Folded: 61cm
£59.99	£74.99	Max Height: 153cm

BH02 Ball Head	BH08 Ball Head	Triad 60 Lite
Quick release plate, spirit level, 360 degree rotation, tripod control knobs	Quick release plate, spirit level, 360 degree rotation, dual control knobs	Including 3-way fluid damped pan/tilt head.
Weight: 0.4kg	Weight: 0.42kg	Weight: 1.58kg
Load: 8.0kg	Load: 12.0kg	Max Load: 5.0kg

BH22 Ball Head	BH25 Ball Head	Triad 60 Lite
Sliding quick release plate, spirit level, 360 degree rotation, tripod control knobs	Sliding quick release plate, spirit level, 360 degree rotation, tripod control knobs	Including 3-way fluid damped pan/tilt head.
Weight: 0.4kg	Weight: 0.4kg	Weight: 1.58kg
Load: 8.0kg	Load: 8.0kg	Max Load: 5.0kg

BH28 Ball Head	BH30 Ball Head	Triad 60 Lite
Quick release plate, spirit level, 360 degree rotation, tripod control knobs	Quick release plate, spirit level, 360 degree rotation, tripod control knobs	Including 3-way fluid damped pan/tilt head.
Weight: 0.4kg	Weight: 0.4kg	Weight: 1.58kg
Load: 8.0kg	Load: 8.0kg	Max Load: 5.0kg

BH28 Ball Head	BH28 Ball Head	Triad 60 Lite
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Load: 8.0kg	Load: 8.0kg	Max Load: 5.0kg

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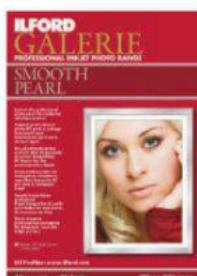
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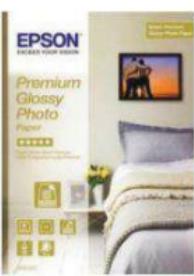
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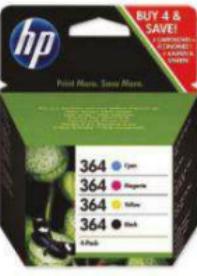
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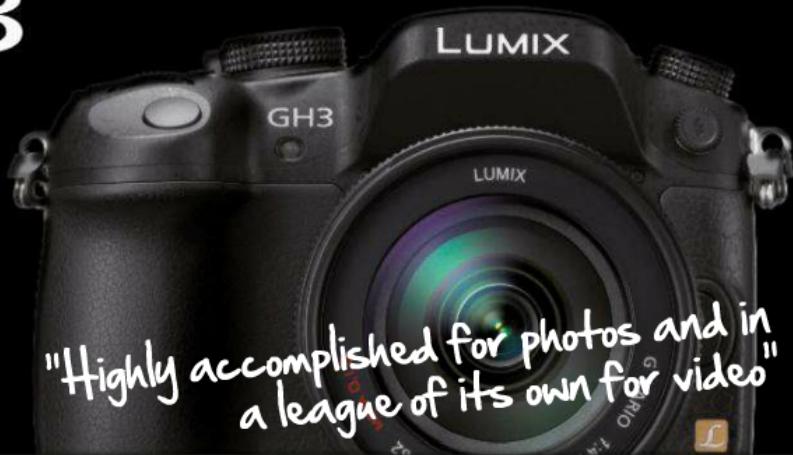
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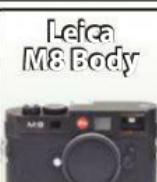
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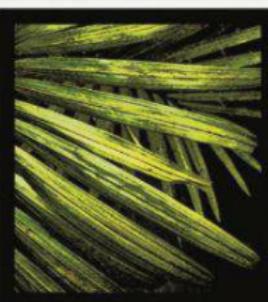
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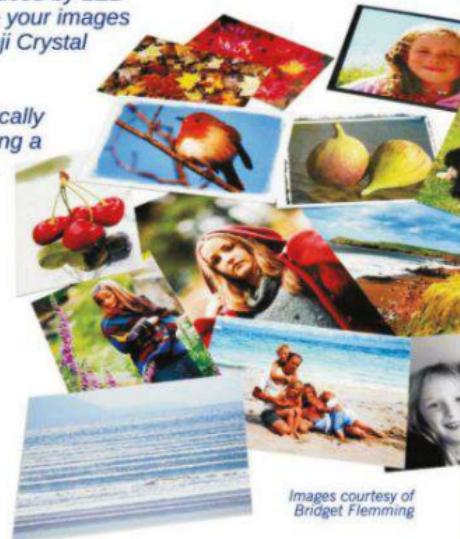
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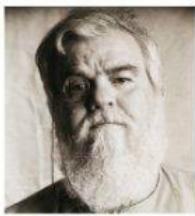
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ROGER HICKS

Roger Hicks says he has seen through the lie that colour is more realistic, more natural, than black & white

EVERY now and then you see through a big lie. Usually, it is a lie that has been repeated so often that you have never even questioned it. Just recently, I saw through one of the biggest lies in photography.

It is that colour is more realistic, more natural, than black & white. This piece of nonsense is based on a simple intellectual failure to distinguish between reality and representation. If that's not clear, let me rephrase it. Anyone who says that black & white is an acquired taste, and that colour is more 'real', has never thought about the nature and history of either art or communication.

The very first representations, made by our remote ancestors, were not colour photographs. They may have been lines drawn in the sand; they may have been scratched on stone or shells; they may have been made on cave walls with charred sticks. We know that tens of thousands

of years ago, there were people painting on cave walls with a limited range of pigments, but we do not know exactly why they used the pigments they did. A very obvious, and probably correct, explanation is availability: they used the pigments they could get. Where they used more than one pigment, we may argue cheerfully whether this was an attempt at greater realism, or whether the pigments had some other symbolism. After all, colour and symbolism are nothing unfamiliar: to this day, a red light means stop and a green light means go.

By definition, a complete and utter representation of everyday reality is impossible. As soon as every single sensory input is duplicated, we no longer have a representation: we have a facsimile, indistinguishable in every way from reality itself. This is why waxworks, even Disney's Animatronics-animated versions, are so pitiful. They are so blatantly unreal that they can appeal only to a child who is still learning to distinguish between what is real, and what is not. They have neither arse to kick, nor soul to damn.

By comparison, listen to a few lines of the Beatles' *'I'm Happy Just To Dance With You'*. We've all been there: the ill-lit dance floor, with its own distinctive smell, the mixture of shyness and daring.

It's a case of 'the pictures on the radio', the ones we see in our heads, the ones we remember in our hearts, not the plonkingly obvious more-real-than-real giant colour blow-ups. Many of those pictures in our hearts are grainy and ill-lit, fading in some places, while remaining in other places as sharp and as clear and as immediate as reality itself, but even then, a highly selective reality. From Yosemite we may remember Bridal Veil Falls twisting and turning in the wind, but forget (until we apply a moment's thought) the others standing around us, their cameras at the ready like ours. Or we remember walking beside the Pacific, newly in love, hand in hand, aware only of each other, and the sound and smell of the sea on the breeze, uncertain of where the rest of our lives may go.

Of course, it is perfectly possible to create great colour photographs. Raghbir Singh's celebration of the Hindustan Ambassador, the iconic car of India, illustrates this perfectly. It is all but impossible not to smile, even laugh out loud, as you read his book *A Way Into India* (Phaidon, 2002). Mostly, though, colour photography is

mere illustration. It sits well enough alongside a travelogue, or helps to float a philosophical concept: what else is conceptual art but a form of philosophy that for some reason dares not speak its name?

Yet in fact, even hand colouring can be more 'real', more evocative, than conventional colour photography. It is selective, even when every single element of the picture is apparently coloured. The colourist has to choose which areas to colour, and in what detail, and what colours to use. It is to do with the way that a subject is interpreted by a human brain, a human heart, a human hand. The interpretation is via the medium of photography, certainly, but the photography is kept in its place. It is not given free rein, allowed to try to tell us too much.

This is why, although I have always hated the phrase, I am beginning to understand the idea of 'an artist who uses a camera' as distinct from 'a photographer'. Even so, I suggest that 'an artist who uses a camera' is otiose and redundant. All we need is 'good photographers' and 'bad photographers'. And to this day, surprisingly many good photographers still use black & white. **AP**

'What else is conceptual art but a form of philosophy that dares not speak its name?'

Roger Hicks is a much published author on photography. He has written more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz. He has been a freelance photographer/writer since 1981, contributing to many magazines. Visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com

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